

THUS SPAKE THE TENTH MASTER

Rendered into English by
DR. GOPAL SINGH



PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA

Sikh Book Centre

Guru Gobind Singh Study Centre

Model Town Extn. Ludhiana.

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1978

Copies : 3000

Price :

150/-

Sikh Book Centre

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Published by the Registrar, Punjabi University, Patiala &
printed at M/s. N. K. Gossain & Co, Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta-67.

PREFACE

The *Dasam Granth*, by the Tenth Master of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh, is a great poetic work, rich in spiritual conceptualization, philosophical vision and imaginative sublimity. The Tenth Guru carries the same poetic ministry as the preceding Gurus whose verse is incorporated in the *Adi Granth*. Of course, his style and language reflect his own unique personality and the social milieu as do the styles of the earlier pontiffs.

The *Guru Granth* symbolizes the philosophical heritage of India even as it retains its own unique vision, thought, true to style values and poetics. The *Dasam Granth* recasts and reinterprets the mytho-poetic and spiritual vision of hoary and fabled India.

It is again characteristic of the Tenth Master that he could pour out unpremeditated verses in the thick of a battle. The onomatopoeic lines catch with superb ease the sounds of galloping steeds and clashing arms. He could not find time to bequeath to us a recension of his own compositions. His writings were collected after his ascension and in this way the treasure of the *Dasam Granth* has come down to us.

In human realization, the highest and purest conception of the Supreme Being has been realized in the *Jāp* or the "Meditation", and in the *Akāl Ustat* or "In praise of the Timeless Being". This reality transcends all phenomenal or sensory experience — 'it is not this, it is not this'. That unifying Reality, the reality that is the ground of all that exists, is immaculate, infinite, timeless, formless, uncreated, unborn, without colour, garb, or symbols, the place or ritualistic dharma. That being is common to all, and exclusive to none, whether a person, a people or a being. He is the Dharma, the standard Dharma — *dharmang dhuja*. All dichotomies, inconsistencies, dualities and trinities are subsumed and dissolved in Him. This is the purest Reality which the Khalsa worships. This is the most persistent theme of the *Dasam Granth*.

The Bachitra Nātak, or "the wondrous Drama", is autobiographical and brings out prominently, in the context of the great spectacle of the Creation since its origin, the role of the House of Nanak in leading mankind to the realization of the Supreme Truth and Ultimate Reality. Truth and Justice must be vindicated and evil confronted, no matter what price is paid in terms of pain and suffering. This is the message of the *Chandi Charitra*, *Shabad Hazāre*, or the "Hymns of the Presence", and the *Swaiyyas* or the "Hymns in Praise of the Timeless Being", are soulful outbursts of mystic and devotional dimensions.

The *Zafarnāmā*, or the "Epistle of Victory", reaffirms our faith in the spirit of man. It avers that a battle may be lost or won; the war against evil will not cease.

We are, thus, beholden to Dr Gopal Singh who has made a work of such unique significance available to the English-speaking world. He has already made a great name for himself by translating the entire corpus of *Guru Granth* into English. It is, therefore, a matter of both pride and privilege that the Punjabi University is publishing his *Selections from the Dasam Granth*. I am sure, the volume will attract wide and significant notice.

August 27, 1976.
Punjabi University,
Patiala.

INDERJIT KAUR SANDHU
VICE-CHANCELLOR

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FOREWORD

(By the Author)

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and last Guru of the Sikhs, whose selected works rendered by me into English appear in the following pages, was in many ways a person unique in the annals of man. Born in 1666 A.D. at Patna, in Eastern India, he lived only a brief span of forty two years, as he was assassinated in the Deccan, in the year 1708 A.D. But, he left such a deep impression on the life of his nation that it continues to move millions of people the world over to this day.

Son of a martyr (Guru Tegh Bahadur), great grandson of a martyr (Guru Arjan Dev), he laid at the altar of the Supreme all that he could call his own — father, mother, all his four sons, besides his own life, fighting for the freedom of conscience not only for his own faith but for men and women of all climes and persuasions, including his "enemies". He was obliged to fight the Rajput vassals of the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, in the Shivalik hills and later the forces of the emperor himself. But, though victorious in most of them, he refused to build an empire or to acquire even an inch of anyone's territory. His maxim in battle seems to be what the great Buddha had enunciated before him—only that battle succeeds in ultimate terms in which no one is defeated.

As has been said, he had to fight both Hindus and Muslims and yet both Muslims and Hindus also fought alongside of him. Even in the heat of battle, he refused to inculcate hatred against the religious persuasion of any of his adversaries. "The Hindu temple and the Muslim mosque cry out to the same God", he said. "Men are the same all over, though in appearance they

seem so different". One of his devout disciples, Bhai Kanaihya, when asked why he was ministering water to the wounded on the battlefield without the distinction of friend and foe, is said to have answered :—"My Guru has instructed me thus : To see only the Face of the Beloved in all". And it is a fact of history that although emperor Aurangzeb had given the Guru every conceivable cause for grievance against his House, the Guru helped his pious eldest son, Bahadur Shah, in the battle of succession. When he was approached for help by the widow of Rām Rāi, his cousin brother, (who had established a *gaddi* of his own at Deradoon in opposition to the Guru's House), Guru Gobind Singh went out of his way to rescue her from the vile intrigues and attacks of her deputies (the *Masands*).

Thus, though a matchless warrior, he always remained a Saint at heart. "If there is one God", he said, "then there is also one man". Only Gobind Singh, the Guru of all mankind, could have uttered : "O God of no denomination, greetings to Thee."

His creation of the Khalsa in 1699 is an event of such world significance that Arnold Toynbee has called it the precursor and fore-runner of Lenin's communist party two centuries later in history : an idealistic minority fighting, with the weapons of the adversary, in the name and for the sake of the majority, obliterating all distinctions of caste, nationality, status and sex, though Toynbee has failed to pinpoint the essential difference in outlook and even methodology of the two world revolutionaries. Open diplomacy and shared democracy were indeed the hall-marks of Guru Gobind Singh's Khālsā and not secret manoeuvre for power or self-perpetuation or an imposed system, howsoever good the intentions or quicker the end-results. The means, according to Guru Gobind Singh, determined the quality of the ends.

That a military and political power whose tentacles were spread out through the vast subcontinent of India was successfully challenged after its sway of about a thousand years by the followers of Gobind in the brief span of half a century after his demise, speaks volumes of the new dynamism he had infused in his

subject race, divided and degenerated by caste and clan, region and religion, special diet and dress, superstition and servility. How much caste had demoralised and disintegrated our nation is exemplified in no better instance than the fact that high-caste Brahmins refused for a long time to anoint Shivaji, the founder of the first Hindu imperial power in modern times, because he was the son of a farmer and hence a *sudra* (an untouchable). And even after tons of gold had been gifted to them by Shivaji, and the Brahmins agreed to trace his geneology to a Kashatriya king of old, it was decided simultaneously by them that at the time of Shivaji's coronation, the *mantras* of the sacred Veda be uttered so rapidly that the beneficiary is unable to hear them or to know their context and content, the sudras and women being strictly forbidden by Hindu orthodox code to read or listen to the Sacred Word ! Again, instead of going to battle, 14000 choice Rajput brides leapt into the flames and performed the *sati* after their men had been routed and killed in the field at Chitor by the forces of a marauder, Ala-ud-din Khilji.

By declaring all men and women of every caste, colour and station to be equal as much in spiritual as in secular hope, Guru Gobind Singh gave a new nationality to the soul of man everywhere. No other miracle is as socially significant to a whole people than to transform their minds and souls and to make them sovereign in their own right than cringing devotees of a Dark and evil Power which is more interested in their division and destruction than their integrity and self-assertion. The same person was entitled before God and man to be a farmer or a soldier as the high priest and the merchant. And whosoever treated the women in any wise worse than men could not claim Gobind Singh to be his Guru. It has been aptly remarked that while the founder of the Sikh faith, Guru Nānak (1469-1538 A.D.) had regenerated the spirit of man, Guru Gobind Singh gave a new earthly hope to the liberated soul. And yet he deviated not essentially from the moral or the spiritual code enunciated by Nānak. It was in the name and for the sake of the Ideal, the one and the only God, that men and women should seek earthly power and not for self-gratification or glory.

Men have found and employed the deadliest weapons and vilest intrigues to gain and retain power, but not how to use it in the interest of the poor and the common good. Guru Gobind Singh's God not only brings us earthly power but also directs our within to utilise it for the fulfilment of a society as much as one's own soul. And if individuals or societies flout with impunity the Moral law, God in diverse ways creates conditions for their ruin and destruction. In victory, magnanimity ; in defeat, defiance ; in peace, equal sharing of power and grace.

That is what makes Guru Gobind Singh and his God so very relevant to society in all ages, including the so-called modern, scientific age, when people have unravelled the mysteries and controlled the forces of nature as never before. But, man from man was never more distant, nor the human soul ever before so much in torment, afraid of itself as much as of its neighbour and society. The poor man's physical distress is being replaced now by the economic man's loneliness, greed, brutality, and loss of humanity.

And yet neither the Guru nor his God is self-centred or exclusive. Guru Gobind Singh did not believe in any god or goddess, incarnations or chosen Messiahs and mercilessly decried superstition and ritual in their name as spurious and false. And yet with what moral zeal and poetic fervour he describes in his poetry the chivalry of Durga, Bhagauti or Chandi—the Hindu goddess of war—and the war-exploits and the divine piety of Sri Rama and Sri Krishna ! How he invokes the Supreme as Shiva ! And though the "Triya Charitra" (or "the trickeries of women"), included in his works, is considered to be apocryphal, there is an undertone of moral grandeur informing this work throughout and a devotional attitude towards beauty, whether physical, moral or spiritual. The God of Guru Gobind Singh is involved with and deeply concerned about the welfare of His creation. That is how weapons of all kinds are lauded and yet the emphasis is on their employment always for the Good Cause and never for evil or the subjugation of others. "One must overpower oneself and not the others", says the Guru.

A superb poet of Braj, Panjabi and Persian, there is no metre known to Indian prosody that the Guru has not employed with perfect ease and mastery of diction, nor a metaphor that does not invoke the atmosphere most appropriate to the occasion. How vast is his canvas of experience and interest, how liberal and catholic his outlook, how chivalrous and moral the sentiments he inspires. And how well he can embrace both (often contradictory) facets of Reality in his poetry :

“Greetings, O moon of moons !
Greetings, O sun of suns !
Greetings, O Abysmal Darkness !
O the Destroyer, the Giver of life.”

While depicting the goodness of God, the Guru also identifies Him with the ravisher of beauty, the drunkard, the creator of doom, the dark power. For God is not only all-powerful and the constructor of Grace, but also the creator and the annihilator of evil. Why he creates evil is not that we accept its validity or inevitability but that we negate and fight it out both for the exercise of our spiritual muscle as well as to establish the goodness of God. For, in the ultimate analysis, it is the Good that triumphs, not evil. A seeming defeat suffered in the cause of Good does not detract from the goodness of God, nor a temporary victory won at the cost of moral health. And that is what justifies God — and the Guru — both in history and eternity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author acknowledges with gratitude the assistance rendered by the Sikh savant, Bhai Jodh Singh, former Vice-Chancellor of the Panjabi University in going through my translations of Guru Gobind Singh's selected works and making several valuable suggestions. The late Dr. Balbir Singh, another erudite scholar and man of faith, also looked through the draft and set his seal of approval on it, a gesture I greatly value. My sincere thanks are also due to the Asia Society of New York who placed at my disposal the expert opinion of an American poet as to the diction and idiom employed in this translation. Dr. Suniti Kumār Chatterjee has placed me under a special obligation by finding time to write such a valuable and scholarly introduction to my work. Last but not least, I must thank the Punjabi University for having published this book. I deem it a great honour both to me personally and to the world of letters.

— Author

INTRODUCTION

[By Dr. Suniti Kumār Chatterjee, President, Sahitya Academy,
and National Professor of Humanities]

The annals of India from the oldest recorded period of history as in the age of the Vedas are replete with stories of man's dedication of himself to the Search of the Truth and to the Service of Man. The Thinkers and Seers of India from generation to generation engaged themselves in the perpetual quest after the Reality. They found it as *Rita* or the Eternal Law of Being and as *Satya* or Being or Existence in its own nature. They found it also as *Nirvāna* or the Ultimate Negation of Existence which is the final goal of all being, and as the *Kevala* or the Only Entity without any Godhead, where we have the Sublimation of the Self through the Good Life and Renunciation and Austerity. They saw moreover this Reality as *Dharma* or the All-holding Law of Righteousness, as *Jñāna* or All-embracing Knowledge which also has its other facet as *Preman* or Love. There was always the acceptance of *Tat Sat*, of *That Which Is*, of the *Ding an Sich* or the *Being or Thing in Itself*, in whatever aspect it presented Itself to the Enquiring Mind or the Trusting Spirit, to the Seeker through Knowledge and Thought and Reason and to the Seeker through Intuition and Love and Faith. What a wonderful kaleidoscope of Thought and Faith, with its background of Tolerance and Acceptance, is presented by these annals of Indian religious adventure, in the vast range or succession of Indian Reasoning and Believing through the centuries! Leaving aside the pre-Vedic or pre-Aryan creeds which were current among the Dravidians, the Austriacs (Kols or Mundas), and the Mongoloid

peoples, creeds and cults which have very largely survived even to our day (frequently being assimilated or Aryanised in the various forms of later Indian religion), we have in India a succession of religious developments unparalleled anywhere else in the world, all generally mutually sympathising with and accepting each other. The various schools of Vedic thought and practice, including that of the Sacrifice of meat and grain and drink to the Gods; the later Vedic and Upanishadic realisation or doctrine of the All-embracing Brahman; Jaina philosophical ratiocination, looking for the Transformation of the Individual Self into the Supreme, through the good life, through renunciation and through austerity; Buddhism of both the Maha-yana and the Hina-yana, and the later Buddhist schools of Vajra-yana, etc.; Puranic Brahmanism, with its Triune Deity, its tropical forest of myths and cults, its rituals, its hospitable bosom as centuries passed giving asylum to all folk cults and religious usages of the pre-Aryan and non-Indian peoples; Tantrism both of Maha-yana Buddhism and Brahmanical Hinduism, which definitely brought in some extraneous Chinese elements; the early medieval Natha cult, in which Siva as the Brahmanical Divinity and Buddha of the late Vajra-yana and Sahaja-yana joined hands; the South Indian (Tamil) forms of the Bhakti cult as in the doctrines of the Sivite Nayanmars and the Vishnuite Azhvars, from the first half of the first millennium A.D.; the Tamil cult of Murukan or Karttikeya with its philosophy; Sankara and his *Saguna* and *Nirguna* concepts of the Reality; the Philosophies of Ramanuja, of Madhva, and of the Saiva Monotheistic School of Basava; the Bhakti Schools of North India as in the doctrines of Ramanand and his successors; Chaitanya; Sankaradeva; Vallabha; the Revival of the Monotheism of the Upanishad combined with medieval Bhakti, by Guru Nanak, and the further transformation of this into the cult of Sikhism as it now is by Guru Gobind Singh — with its basis of Vedic Monotheism and Puranic Bhakti, and a modern rational approach; Indian Sufism, with a transformation of its Muslim bases; Brahmoism, of the Adi, the Nava-Vidhan and the Sadharan Schools of Bengal, and the Prarthana Samaj School of Bombay: the Arya Samāj, in Punjab and North India; the various cults of a whole host of neo-Hindu

sadhus, jogis, gurus, bābās and mās — most of whom, in the eyes of their followers, are manifestations of the Godhead as miracle-working divine beings — both men and women, and both within India and abroad ; and, above all — normal human sages, seers and teachers like Dara Shikoh, Ram Mohun Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and a few others, whose ideal was a Universal Panhuman Approach, rising above all ritual and popular faith, and embracing the highest intellectualism as well as intuitional mysticism of Man everywhere:— all these present a panorama of religious aspiration and achievement, as well as final attainment through agnostic endeavour and through intuitive conviction or realisation.

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Culture has been defined as *Thought in Action, suffused by humane sentiments*. The Bhagavad-Gita says that for Perfection in Beauty, for Triumph in Life and for Completeness of Being, there must be the Thinking Man, whose ideas are to be carried out in practical life by the Man of Action. Side by side with her great Thinkers — her Heroes of Thought and of Intuition and Mysticism, India has also her Heroes of Achievement, her great Exemplars in all the walks of life. There were the Leaders of Men, in Peace and War, purposeful in life with true love and fellow-feeling for man and woman, humane and compassionate in their dealings with all; and there were also ideal Rulers of men when occasion demanded it. Sometimes in their perfection of character they were God-like Men; and frequently, as men in their human weaknesses, they had their imperfections. And among them were the saintly rulers and fighters, shapers of history and makers of men, who, when it was necessary, through their suffering and their martyrdom they exalted men, in the pursuit of an Ideal, from frail, weak human beings to veritable Gods who defied all pain and suffering, and death, as martyrs, — who lived “lives of four dimensions”, so to say. Thus, we have Vasishta and Visvamitra, Bhrigu and Agastya, Divodasa and Tritsu, Manu Vaivasvata and Pururavas, Bharata and Krishna, Dvaipayana Vyasa, and other leaders of men, mythical and semi-historical or histori-

cal, from the Vedic period onwards; and then Krishna Vasudeva, Yudhishtira, Arjuna, and other heroic rulers of the ancient Indian Epic and the Puranas; and early Hindu kings and empire-builders like Brihadratha, Sisunaga, Ajatasatru, Pradyota (Canda Mahasena), Udyana, Prasenajit, Mahapadma Nanda, Chandragupta Maurya, Bindusara, Asoka; Satavahana, Vilivayakura; the Early Cozha (Chola), Pandiya and Chera Kings, Candragupta Vikramaditya, Samudragupta; Pallava Mahendravarman; Harshavardhana, Bhaskaravarman; Pulikesin; Rajendra Cola, Rajaraja Cola; Gopala; Ramapala, Ballalasena of Bengal; Prithviraja Cauhana; Vallabharaja; Bukka Raya, Harihara, Krishnadeva Raya; Anangabhimha Deva; Danujamardana Deva; Husain Shah of Bengal; Babar; Sher Shah; Zainul Abedin of Kashmir; Akbar; Narayanarayana of Koch Bihar; Gadadhar Sinha and Rudra Sinha of Assam; Sivaji, Guru Govind Singh; Baji Rao Peshwa; Maharaja Ranjit Singh; and other lesser names who had always in mind the well-being and happiness of the people placed under their charge.

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And among such rulers and leaders of men, we should not forget the martyrs, persons who valued their principles of faith and ideals of religion above their lives. They were the men who gave an exposition of the Christ-Ideal of seeking to save others by sacrificing their own lives. Particularly when a new set of conquerors came on the Indian scene, who were intolerant of a religion or doctrine which they did not understand, and thought (although it was against the best teachings of their own religions) that people who did not accept their own point of view in religion were infidels or heathens, cursed of God, and who deserved only to be brought down and humbled, and even made to leave this world by being done to death for their steadfastness in their own faith and rejection of what these foreigners wanted to force upon them. Such a situation was unknown in India before the advent of certain intransigent and intolerant types of Muslims, and of Christians, as for example the Portuguese Roman Catholics who set up the Inquisition in Goa. The concept of a *Martyr* for the sake of religion — of a *Shahid* in the

parlance of Islam—was unknown in pre-Muslim India, and we have now been forced to adopt the Arabic word *Shahid* in Indian languages, when it became a common enough thing in a Muslim state in India in the early centuries for men to forfeit their life or liberty or civic rights if they did not subscribe to the creed and cult of Islam. This became quite common in some Muslim-dominated states under the rule of ardent religious fanatics like *Aurangzeb*, who did not understand any approach to the Godhead other than that of orthodox Islam. We have as a result of this quite a clear clash between these two sets of ideologies—one, tolerant and ready to accept and let live, and the other bent upon removing by any means what was considered anti-religious, heretical and repugnant—the last thousand years of suffering and saintly glory for the Martyrs, and of iniquity and eternal shame for the persecutors.

So during the last thousand years of India's contact with Islam, and the last five hundred years' contact with Christianity, among the men of action and heroes of Hindu India, there grew up an India's Roll of Honour of Martyrs, who can take their stand in similar niches of honour with the greatest Martyrs of all other Faiths, Christian or Islamic (who suffered at the hands of either their own co-religionists themselves or from others); and in this Roll of Martyrs in Hindudom, the Sikhs have the most glorious priority and pride of place.

As in the history of any other country or people, the history of India can be looked upon both as a continuous and unbroken stream and as a series of brilliant epochs or episodes in the same unbroken chain. Thus we can speak of the Vedic Episode, the Upanishadic Episode, the Mahabharata Episode, the Nanda, Maurya, Sunga, Andhra and Ikshvaku Episodes; the old Chola, Pandya and Chera Episodes in Tamizhakam or the Tamil Nad; the Gupta, the Pallava, and the later Chola Episodes; and likewise all similar episodes and periods of rule and cultural advance like the Pala and Sena, the Gurjara-Pratihara and Gahadvala, the Western and Eastern Ganga, the Ahom, the Kesari and the Vijayanagara; the Early Rajput; the Turki, the Pathan and the

Mogul ; the Maratha ; the Sikh ; the Malla and the Gorkha ; and the rest ; — each with its special valuable or unique contribution in the development of Indian history and culture.

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Of these, the Sikh Episode is one of the most glorious in the history of India and the world. What may be described as the *Sikh Epic of India* took up the better part of five centuries, roughly from 1450 to 1950. And this Sikh Episode or Epic embraced and even sanctified the life of a living people, virile, sensitive and idealistic as well as sensible and active ; and this epic tale has not yet run its course. The tone was given to this Epic by two of the greatest sons of India and the world — Guru Sri Nanak Dev (1469-1539) and Guru Sri Gobind Singh (1666-1708). Like most of the various other episodes of Indian history noted above, the Sikh Episode or Epoch, which is identical with "the Sikh Epic, 1450-1950", can be divided into several periods. These periods are — (i) 1450-1650, (ii) 1650-1850, and (iii) 1850-1950. The first period is the first Great Book or Canto of this Epic. This first period, of roughly 200 years, was dominated by the Saint and Sage, who was equally a householder and a wanderer, the man who successfully strove to bring back to the Hindus the ancient spiritual knowledge of their ancestors in having a faith in One Unique God as the Single Entity in Existence — Guru Sri Nanak Dev. It may be rightly called *the Age of the Saints and Wise Men, of Thinkers and Poets, of Lovers of both God and Man*. The Second Period, 1650-1850, was the age in which the spirit of Gurus Sri Tegh Bahadur and Sri Gobind Singh inspired the Sikh community and raised the Sikhs up from the position of peaceful, and harmless Devotees of God to courageous and doughty Fighters, Heroes and Martyrs, turning lambs into lions, and made the Sikh name a byword for self-sacrifice, for suffering, for service, and for courage and prowess. This was the great age of the Heroes and Heroines, of Martyrs and Fighters for the Good Cause, True Leaders of Men. And this continued until the power of the Sikhs and their military and

political glory rose to its apogee when Maharaja Ranjit Singh came to the field. But with the establishment of their political and military power, there was a falling off from the great ideals in Faith inculcated by Guru Gobind Singh — from simplicity to pomp and grandiosity. The Third Age or Period, 1850 to Modern Times, has been roughly an age of Sikh decline. But the sterling moral character of Sikhs did not undergo any great deterioration, thanks to the strong leaven of Guru Gobind Singh's teachings. As a potent leaven, this had been creating a change in the Sikh *ethos*, with its combination of strength and gentleness, and the Sikh mentality was becoming established in its virile approach to life and also in its tenderness to all beings as one of its heritages from Hindudom. The baptismal water used in the Sikh Ceremony, turning anybody into a Sikh — the *Pahul* — is symbolical of this transformation. It was pure water in a cauldron, stirred with a dagger which stood for the power of the good in fighting evil, and sweetened with sugar to signify that the Sikh approach to all must be marked by sweetness. The Sikhs then developed their special qualities as disciplined and courageous soldiers in the service of their mother-land (although under the auspices of their British rulers). And the Sikh Community developed all the sturdy and sterling qualities of farmers — tillers of the soil — as well as builders, mechanists and workers of all kinds. And at the same time they became most natural and ardent propagators of the simple and strong faith of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind, with the philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads and the spirit of Bhakti or Devotion to God as inculcated by the Puranas and the medieval Hindu Saints — all in their simple Sikh setting, freed from the fetters of the barren Hindu caste which was already becoming effete and a social drag, and the complicated paraphernalia of Brahmanical ritual.

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The spirit that was working behind the history of this ideological freeing of a people has been that of Guru Gobind Singh. He was one of the greatest personalities of India ; and India as well as the rest of the world have both to know him and to learn

to honour him. A study of his great life and personality, and all that he achieved within the short span of 42 years that he lived, makes one feel very certain that he had very few peers to equal him—he was of the company of Krishna of the Mahabharata, of Buddha, of Chandragupta Maurya, of Asoka, of Chandragupta Vikramaditya, of Harshavardhana, of Sankara, of Madhavacharya Sayana, of Sivaji, of Vivekananda, as a man of action. And he was something more, with many more facets to his character than most of these heroes of India. He was a religious leader, but from his boyhood he manifested also a rare vision of the realities and problems of the life he had to live in a way which marked him off from all lesser men. He grew up into both a thinker and a fighter, a man of good council and decision in peace and war, and a man of prowess in battle in both victory and reverse. He combined in himself both a poet and a man of devotion who was suffused with the spirit of God, and at the same time he was a finished archer and wielder of the sword. He was never bound by obscurantist ritual (from which he appears to have freed himself as one who discovered the Ultimate Truth for himself), and he had a most uncommon sense which enabled him to rise above barriers of caste and convention. His was the soul of a poet which appreciated the great myths of the Hindu Puranas; and as a soldier of God who had dedicated himself to a God who is forever fighting the forces of Evil, he understood the value of the Good and relentless fighter in the Army of the Good against Evil. He was a philosopher to whom the essentials of faith and religion alone had a value, and who could easily come to the basic core of religion in life. He could follow scrupulously the intricate rituals as prescribed by the Brahmanical religion, as for instance, when (though recent Sikh researchers deny this) he followed the elaborate sacrifice in honour of the Mother Goddess Chandika Nayana Devi, the slayer of Demons. But he could rise above all ceremonial and rituals. He had a deep knowledge of the lore and literature of the Sikh order, of the inspired writings of all the great teachers of the order, and he brought out, with an assistant (Bhai Mani Singh) to help him in preparing it, the definitive final redaction of the Sikh Scripture, the *Guru Granth*,

as standardised by the scholars, devotees, and scribes of Dam-dama Sahib, where he established his headquarters as soon as he got a little respite from war. He was a linguist of rare attainments, with a thorough knowledge of his mother-tongue Eastern Panjabi of the Manjha and its other dialects (besides Lahnde-di-Boli or the Speech of Western Panjab; of the Brajbhasha form of Western Hindi; of the *Sadhukkadi Boli* or Hindustani Speech as current among the *Sadhus* or Wandering Mendicants, Hindu and Muslim, of North India; of the *Rekhta* or Mixed Dialect of Hindi and Persian as a sort of incipient Hindustani or Urdu; besides the developing literary Hindustani of the Hindus, which later came to be known as "Hindi"; and Persian, which was the court and official language, and language of literature and culture of North Indian Mogul and other Muslim India. In all these forms of speech, he made original contributions of very high value, which are enshrined in his collected writings. These writings by the Guru form a sort of *Apocrypha to the Guru Granth*. The long letter in Persian, in verse, which he wrote and sent to Aurangzeb in protest against his policy of harrassing and persecuting his Hindu subjects, was taken quite seriously by the Mogul Emperor himself, (whose own Persian style as in his personal letters had a high distinction), both for the subject-matter and for the language.

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In his family life, Guru Gobind Singh (born 1666 A.D.) was an ideal son who understood the greatness of the character of his Father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, who was one of God's own Saints and succourers of men in distress, and he was a dutiful son to his mother Mata Gujari Devi whose nobility of personality and character were of a piece with those of her husband and her son. He was also an ideal husband, whom circumstances forced to accept as his wives three of the most illustrious among ladies of the Sikh faith. They were women of peerless heroism and grace, of saintly as well as heroic mould: namely — Mātā Jitoji, Mātā Sundariji, and Mātā Sahib Deviji. Of these three consorts of the Guru, two (Mātā Jitoji and Mātā Sundariji) were mothers of

the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh, who were all of them great heroes and martyrs. All the four of them made the supreme sacrifice for their principles and religion in their early youth and boyhood. The three wives of the Guru loved their husband with the love of the *Satīs* or ideal wives of India—they were paragons of wifely devotion like Savitri, Damayanti, Sita and Urmila, and Kannaki and Padmini and Tara Bai, and dedicated themselves like true wives to what their husband had taken up as the great mission of his life. Family circumstances as well as a sense of duty and obligation to his people made Guru Gobind Singh take three young girls as his wives in succession. When the Guru was just about 11 years of age, a year after the martyrdom of his father Guru Tegh Bahadur, he was married (this marriage was really of the nature of an engagement or affiancé, following Hindu custom), through the strong desire of his grandmother and mother and other senior relations, to *Mātā Jitoji*. This marriage was already approved by Guru Gobind's father, Guru Tegh Bahadur. The bride's full name was *Ajito*, or *Ajit Kaur* (*Ajita-Kumārī*). She was the daughter of Harjas (Hariyaśas) Subhikhia, a Khattri Sikh born in the same caste as Guru Gobind Singh, of Laupur (Lavapura) or Lahore. The wedding was celebrated with great éclat at Anandapur and not at Lahore, as Anandapur was a new town built by Guru Tegh Bahadur himself. *Mātā Jitoji* took an important part when on the Baisakhi Day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh instituted the basic ritual of the reformed Sikh religion—the Religion of the *Khalsa* or "the Freed and Pure Ones"—the *Pahul*, with its baptismal water, the *Amrit*. It was *Jitoji* who brought some sugar-plums, with which Guru Gobind Singh was most happy to sweeten the pure water in a cauldron which he had stirred with a *Kirpān* or little dagger to signify the ideal of a fighter for the good against evil. *Mātā Jitoji* had three sons, Baba Jujhār Singh, her eldest who died when he was a lad of 11 only, fighting against the enemies of Sikhism at the Battle of Chamkaur (1704), giving up his life along with his eldest brother Bābā Ajit Singh, then 18, on the same day in the same battle-field before the eyes of the Guru. The other two sons of *Mātā Jitoji* were Bābā Zorāwar Singh and Bābā Fateh Singh, who were

boys of only 8 and 6 respectively, when they were most brutally murdered and martyred by being walled up alive upto their heads and then beheaded under order of Wazir Khan, the Mogul Governor of Sirhind. It was because both of these brave boys indignantly refused to abjure their religion and accept Islam. Guru Gobind Singh was a refugee at that time. Mātā Jitoji had a presentiment about the early passing away of all the four sons of the Guru, and she wished in her heart of hearts to predecease them, and she actually died in the year 1701 at Anandpur, at the age of 23.

Mātā Sundariji, the second wife of the Guru, was the daughter of Ram Saran Kumrav of Lahore, also a Khattri Sikh. He brought his daughter before the Guru's mother and grand-mother, and offered her in marriage to him, declaring that he had already thought of her as a spouse of the Guru, and she would never be married to any other person. Mātās Nānaki and Gujari liked Sundari for her beauty and demeanour, and were also pleased with her father, and on their insistence the Guru took her as his second wife, in the year 1684 A.D., when he was about 18. There was no expensive celebration. She became the mother of the eldest of the four sons of the Guru, Baba Ajit Singh, who was born in 1686 and died with his second brother (eldest son of Mata Jitoji) the same day fighting at the field of Chamkaur. Mata Sundariji died in 1747, and she was the last among the three wives of Guru Gobind Singh to die. Although there was no earthly Guru among the Sikhs after 1708, Mata Sundari for all the years from 1708 to 1747 administered (with Mata Sahib Deviji, so long as she was alive) with great ability the mundane affairs of the Sikh community over which she had full control. She appointed the Guru's friend and literary Secretary, Bhai Mani Singh, who had helped the Guru in preparing the final redaction of the *Guru Granth*, the *Head Granthi* (Priest) at the Golden Temple at Amritsar. She spent her later life mostly in Delhi and in Mathura, and she died in Delhi.

The circumstances under which Mātā Sahib Deviji was married to Guru Gobind were similar to those under which Mātā

Sundariji was married. Her father, Bhai Ram Basi, a Khattri Sikh from Rohtas in Jhelum District, also came before the Guru and offered his daughter to the Guru as his third wife. And when the Guru refused to marry again, he declared that as he had already dedicated her to the Guru's service as a wife or hand-maiden, all Sikhs were calling her their Mother, and as such she could not be married to any man other than Guru Gobind Singh. Thus in a way his hands were forced, and out of chivalry he married her, in the year 1701 A.D. She had no children of her own, and at the time of the wedding, the Guru is said to have taken a vow of celibacy (*brahmacarya*). In any case, to give her some consolation, the Guru declared that she would be called the "Mother of the *Khālsā*", as Guru Gobind Singh was "the Father of the *Khālsā*", and when a Sikh takes the *Pahul* rite, she and Guru Gobind Singh are called the Mother and Father of the *Khālsā*. Mātā Sahib Deviji was with the Guru in the Deccan until his death in 1708. She and Mātā Sundariji together carried on the affairs of the *Khālsā*; and she predeceased Mata Sundariji by several years.

There was perfect understanding and amity among these three "Mothers" of the *Khalsa*, in their love for their husband and in their fullest knowledge of his great work in life, in the midst of the terrible mishaps, sufferings and sorrows they had to meet in their lives.

These great ladies, the three consorts of Guru Gobind Singh, were quite worthy of the line of the wives of some of the Gurus of the Sikhs as exemplars of Indian and Sikh wifehood. They followed in their lives the ideals of their husbands — ladies whose personalities and character deserve wider study and greater recognition. There was first of all Mātā Triptā, the wife of Mehta Kalu Bedi and mother of Guru Nānak and his elder sister Nānaki Devi. Then Mātā Sulakshani (known also as Sonni and Dhummi), the wife of Guru Nanak, and mother of his two sons, Sri Chand and Lakhmi Dass. Then we have Mātā Bhāni or Bhavāni Devi, the wife of Guru Ram Das, and mother of Guru Sri Arjun Dev; Mātā Nānaki Devi, one of the

three wives of Guru Har Gobind and mother of Guru Tegh Bahādur; and Mātā Gujari Devi, the wife of Guru Tegh Bahādur and mother of Guru Gobind Singh. The names of all of them are of holy remembrance, along with those of their husbands, and other Sikh heroes and heroines, and saints and martyrs.

This gives in brief the married life of Guru Gobind Singh, how he was an ideal husband and householder even in a polygamous set up, and how all his three wives and he himself understood the uniqueness of the situation, with its background of love and sacrifice, and the terrible struggle which Guru Gobind Singh was in the midst of to preserve his great religious ideals and to maintain the very existence of the community,—in the face of the tremendous odds of Mogul power and Aurangzeb and the Mullahs' cruelty and bigotry.

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Such a unique combination of manifold virtues in so many walks of life it would be exceedingly difficult to find. Guru Gobind Singh was in the first instance a Saint who had dedicated himself to God, a God-intoxicated Philosopher. He was also such a sincere Lover of Man that he wanted to see all man-made differences created by barriers of formal religion, and social distinctions brought in by caste, to be obliterated from Society. Religion he wanted to bring to the masses in its simplest form, without any ritualistic obscurantism; and in this he fully succeeded, at least so far as the Sikh community was concerned. And this was after he had finally rejected age-old ceremonies and rituals which had become accepted as axiomatic facts of religion. Thus, for example, there was the propitiation of the gods by performing the Vedic rite of the *Homa* or Fire-sacrifice, and the Tantric *Puja* or worship of God as the great Repository of Power (*Śakti*) for fighting the demons of Evil. He believed only in the *Supreme Being That Is*, and inculcated Faith in that alone; and he relied on his own right arm and the sword and soldierly discipline among his men rather than the mumbo-jumbo of ritual

and special ceremonial which the religions he knew taught people to perform, but which from his own experience he found to be useless and futile. He was a combination of all virtues and all noble qualities. Scholarly persons endowed with a power of understanding—whether they are members of the Sikh community who had accepted the Way of Thought and the Way of Life taught by him and expressed in his life; or members of the orthodox Hindu fold whose basic ideals of thought and faith are as in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the later Bhakti Concepts (the same as those of Guru Nānak and other Gurus and of Guru Gobind himself as the founder of the *Khālsā Panth*); or whether they are Muslims who can rise above the narrow sectarian faith of the *Shariat* or the Quranic Law with its exclusiveness, and are moved by the more humanistic path of *Tasawwuf* or Esoteric Theosophy of love and acceptance and of inclusiveness; or whether again they are Christians who believe in a God who is the God of all Mankind, who knows and understands; or whether in the final instance they are modern scholars whose religious notions rise above all sects and formal creeds, eschewing a blind adherence to the so-called God-given and infallible scriptures—they will all testify to Guru Gobind Singh's all-comprehensive greatness and understanding.

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Leaving aside the galaxy of Sikh religious men and sages, the *Bhagats*, *Sadhus* and *Granthis* of the traditional type throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, and erudites and scholars with a knowledge of the great things in the thought and literature of the present-day Sikhdom, and beginning with eminent Sikh writers like Dr. Gopal Singh, Dr. Mohan Singh, S. Harbans Singh, S. Ganda Singh, Sardar Surendra Singh Majithia and a whole host of other illustrious names, too numerous to mention, we can think of orthodox as well as heterodox Hindu scholars outside the Sikh fold also—like those from Bengal like Akshay Kumar Datta, Sarat Kumar Roy, Tin-kauri Banerji, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore, Vivekananda swami, Indu Bhushan Banerji, Haran Chandra Chakladar, Jatindra Nath Chatterji; and Sarvepalli

Rādhakrishnan and K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar from Tamil Nadu; as well as many others, translators from English and from the Gurmukhi, — who have testified to the uniqueness of Guru Gobind Singh's (as well as Guru Nanak's) personality as an all-enfolding one. There are also illustrious devotees of the Sikh achievement in the domains of both the spirit and of the dedicated life, like Max Arthur Macauliffe, and a number of other Europeans and Americans, like J. D. Cunningham, W. H. McLeod, Stefano Piano, and others, sincere students of the ideals of the Gurus and of the *Khālsā*. Of what some of the greatest of these scholars both Sikh and non-Sikh have said. I feel inclined to quote from a few of the most eloquent praises — particularly from the late Professor Indu Bhushan Banerji of Calcutta, Dr. Gopal Singh, Dr. Ganda Singh, S. Puran Singh, Dr. Mohan Singh, S. Kartar Singh, S. Jodh Singh, S. Teja Singh and some others, including some Muslims like Syed Muhammad Latif. I have done that previously *in extenso* in my little paper on Guru Gobind Singh (published by the University of the Panjab, Chandigarh, on the occasion of his Tricentennial Birthday Celebrations). Above all, Dr. Gopal Singh's encomium as in his most excellent little book on Guru Gobind Singh (as published by the National Book Trust of Delhi) is there, as also in his other writings and in the present work as well. But I cannot refrain from quoting a few pages from S. Harbans Singh's fine work on the Guru (as brought out by the Guru Gobind Singh Foundation of Chandigarh in 1966), which in brief echo my own feelings about the greatness of Guru Gobind Singh in a much better way than I could do myself. These are the few paras from S. Harbans Singh's book mentioned above (pp. 173 — 177).

“Apart from his historical *rôle* as the creator of a framework of high social and ethical values and of an order dedicated to the principles of theistical belief and moral and heroic action, Guru Gobind Singh's personal splendour and aura are a unique phenomenon in the history of the world. It is difficult to image a genius more majestic, comprehensive and versatile. In the words of the Muslim

historian, Syed Muhammand Lalif. Guru Gobind Singh "was a lawgiver in the pulpit, a champion in the field, a king on his *masnad* and a *faqir* in the society of the *Khālsā*".

"He was a seer with a full awareness of his divine purpose and an intense love of the people, a kingly patron of learning and a poet of deep mystic insight and ardour, a natural leader of men and a soldier of unmatched military prowess and courage, a social reformer and liberator, and a saint with wide human sympathy. He acutely felt the people's pain and suffering, and made the greatest sacrifices to secure alleviation. The words he had spoken as a child — innocently, but purposefully — proved so reassuring for his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, in carrying out his resolve to lay down his life for the vindication of the principles of justice and freedom. He himself sacrificed his four sons, and so much besides, to fulfil the historical mission to which he had committed himself and his followers. He created the instruments of a far-reaching social revolution, and underwent in this process dramatic variations of fortune. Yet in all circumstances he retained his spiritual equanimity and aplomb, and set a superb example of sternly moral and high-hearted action. Whether he was in Anandpur riding his handsome blue charger, his regal plume setting off his wiry and commanding figure, with a knightly body of devoted and daring Sikhs following him, or in the desert of Māchhiwārā, barefoot and forlorn, his heart was constantly in harmony with the Divine Spirit, neither losing its qualities of love and compassion in one situation, nor giving way to despair in the other.

"Another important aspect of Guru Gobind Singh's genius was its poetic vitality. Just as he directed his practical ministry to the establishment of truth and justice, he used the medium of poetry to deliver the divine revelation. Not all of his verse has come down to us; a considerable part

of it was lost in the turbulent days of his later career. Mercifully, there is still enough of it to reveal the uncanny power and range of his poetic utterance and its spiritual efficacy. His poetry is unexcelled for its immediacy, freshness and vigour. In proclaiming the supreme holiness and majesty of God, it remains unsurpassed in any tongue. Another point of excellence lies in its descriptions of the scenes of battle. The sounds and fury of raging action — its tempo and heat as well as the clashing of steel emitting metallic clangour and sparks — are recaptured in vivid and evocative verbal and metrical patterns which have an overpowering physical impact. Guru Gobind Singh thus created meaningful imagery both of worship and chivalry. For its intellectual sweep, granite-like quality and inner rhythm, his poetry is so different from the literary creations of the period marked by effervescent and inconsequential sentimentalism.

“Prophet, poet, soldier, philosopher, prince and recluse, Guru Gobind Singh is lovingly remembered for the intense humanity and compassion of the ministry he introduced into the world. He carried out within the brief span of 42 years a wide diversity of roles with extraordinary resource and purposefulness. Over the years, he has become a most eloquent symbol of all that is virile and positive in our religious tradition. Visions of glory are conjured up as that vital, many-splendoured image, beplumed and enrobed, saintly symbols and badges claiming precedence with soldierly regalia, emerges before our eyes from the folds of history. It is the centre of the Sikhs’ memories of their origin and tradition, and a perennial source of inspiration for them. It still stimulates among them a peculiar kind of spiritual upsurge, and they have always felt the presence of the Master-soul among them. In the crucial moments of their recent history, the Lord of the White Hawk was as tangibly their hero and guiding-spirit as he had always been since the time of his earthly existence.

Guru Gobind Singh had set himself against oppression and intolerance. He did not fight for any territory or worldly power, or against any religion or sect. Among his admirers and followers were Hindus as well as Muslims. Many staunch followers of Islam had aligned themselves with his against the imperial armies. Pir Budhu Shah sacrificed four of his sons and a number of his disciples in the battle of Bhangāni fighting on his side. The Muslim ruler of Malerkotla, Nawab Sher Muhammad Khan, raised a strong protest against the execution of Guru Gobind Singh's two minor sons at Sirhind. Thus people of different faiths were attracted to the Guru whose teaching was that all men were equal and that, though the outer forms differed, the fundamental truth was the same everywhere".

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This is not all. Guru Gobind Singh was not only just one of the greatest sons of India, but in his spiritual, intellectual and humanitarian calibre and in his organisational powers and qualities of leadership, in the originality of his ideas, and in his ability to attract the love and devotion of men to his teachings and to his personality—he was one of the two dozen of the world's elect who gave the lead to the course of civilisation. He is a towering giant among men of the same order; such as the semi-mythical Vedic sages like Vasishtha and Visvamitra, and Agastya, and the Epic Heroes, teachers and organisers as well as sages and saints like Krishna and Vyasa, who were also great men of thought and action; and thinkers as well as lovers of man and of all life like Buddha and Mahavira; like the Egyptian king Akhen-Aton, who discovered the Oneness of Divinity and tried to establish a knowledge of it among his polytheistic Egyptian people; like the religious leader and organiser Moses among the Jews, who gave them their religion and its high ideals; a lover of God like Isaiah; a Fighter for Truth and Organiser of his people like Zarathushtra; an ideal ruler of men, a fighter and builder of international amity with toleration and respect for all religions, like Kurush or Cyrus the

Great of ancient Iran, and like Alexander the Great of Greece; and a seeker of peace among peoples like Asoka Maur̥ya of India; and similar great rulers who were moved by high ideals of love and service for men, like Alfred the Great of England, Akbar the Great of India and Abraham Lincoln of the United States. In his breadth of vision and his poetic sensibility, he had a kindred spirit with persons of quite a different temperament and activity, for instance like Ram Mohun Ray, Swami Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore. And in his patriotism, which was not exclusively for his own people, he was like his other great contemporary in India, Sivaji. A repository of all virtues and excellences, and as one who deserved to the fullest the epithet of the *Full Man*, the *Pūrṇa Mānava*, or *Insān al-Kāmil*, Guru Gobind Singh would always present many common facets of character and achievement with the world's greatest.

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One of the greatest things in the career of Guru Gobind Singh has been his self-effacement in the domain of spiritual leadership. It was his abolition of the office of an earthly Guru—a Pope or Khalifa, or Omniscient Guide who abrogates to himself (openly or tacitly), or to whom is ascribed (without his active opposition and frequently with his acquiescence) all spiritual knowledge and power and even a divine status. After a series of nine dedicated Saints and Sages who tried to bring among men a common-sense view of religion and faith—the nine Gurus, the Leaders in Faith and Discipline among the Sikhs (two of whom were Martyrs, victims at the altar of fanaticism)—Guru Gobind Singh, who was accepted as the 10th, declared that after him there will be no further human Guru. He understood that with the weakness of man, such an institution might easily degenerate into something undesirable and far removed from the ideal. He declared that there was to be no other human leader or Guru after him. After his death, the accumulated experience and wisdom of the saints, thinkers and devotees as enshrined in the collection of their writings and admonitions and as compiled by the Fifth Guru, *viz.* Guru

Ariun Dev, the *Guru Granth* was to act as the Supreme Leader and Teacher — as the Embodiment of the Voice of God as it has come through the nine Masters whose number included two Martyrs.

Guru Gobind was also an inspired Minstrel of God, as we see from his writings — particularly his hymns and canticles as in the *Jāp Sāhib*, and the *Akāl Ustati*, and in his prayers and meditations as in the *Sawaiyās*, the *Sabad Hazāre*, the *Benati Chaupāi* and other poetical compositions. Here we have a mystic seeker who merged his own existence into that of God, who put himself in tune with the Infinite; and in these compositions he was a brother in faith with the greatest mystic philosophers and poets who had realisation and who could speak out in all religions — the Vedic and Upanishadic *Rishis*, the Jewish Prophets, Lao Tzu, Zoroaster in his *Gathas*, the medieval Tamil *Navanmārs* and *Azhvārs*, the Sufis of Islam like Ibn- al-Arabi and Jalaluddin Rumi (who were truly the *Lisān al-Ghayb* or “the Tongue of the Unseen One”: as the Sufis called them), Christian Mystics like St. Francis of Assisi, Thomas à Kempis, St. Catharine of Siena and St. John of the Cross, the Saints and *Bhagats* of Medieval India like Kabir, Tulsidas and Dadu, the Tibetan Lamaistic Mystics like Milarepa, and modern philosopher-sages who had attained to a perception of the Reality.

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Apart from his realisation of the Infinite and the Formless, as a poet of an all-embracing imagination, he was sensitive to the beauty of the physical creation outside, almost even like Rabindranath Tagore, and he unquestionably realised that the Unmanifest and Formless One as well as the Manifest One in its various forms of Beauty and Graciousness and of Terror and Terribleness, were but two aspects or facets of Being. Always and at every step, while reiterating the absolute Oneness of the Reality, of the Unity of the Godhead, Guru Gobind Singh was also alive to the aesthetic beauty and the elevating character of the great Myths and Legends of the Hindu Faith in which he was born. He did not abjure them as mere idle stories and

superstitions, but he found a virtue in them in preparing the mind for higher aspiration and upliftment or detachment. Herein he shows a point of agreement with Rabindranath Tagore, with whom the great conceptions and figures of Myth and Legend were not forms of error and degradation, to be shunned as evil by those who aspire to be among the élect of God.

It may be quite pertinently asked in the present context, what is the real interpretation of the great *Hadith* or saying of the Prophet Muhammad, when he said — *li-llāhi kunuzun taḥta-l-'arshi — mafātiḥu-hā 'alsināthu-l-shu'arā'* ; — “There are treasures of God under the Throne, and the keys are the tongues of the Poets”. Muhammad was a true poet of the Unseen, of the same order as the Hebrew Prophets. But as one born and brought up in the arid desert of Arabia, he lacked the interest of the Indo-European and other peoples in the art and appreciation of Myths and Legends and Romantic Stories. But still, can this great *Hadith*, or saying ascribed to him, refer to the treasures that are in the myths and imaginative stories relating to the Divinity, the explanation of which is in Poetry?

Lesser minds would take all these mythical tales to be literally true, and they showed the *līlā* or sport of the Godhead which wanted to make Itself approachable and understood by the limited intelligence of the ordinary man. Rabindranath was by his intellectual training, as an Upanishadic Brahmo in his early youth, a believer in the absolute Unity of the Divinity. But at the same time, he had in his mind the atmosphere of a highly imaginative polytheistic Puranic world, as a member of the great Hindu community, nurtured also in Sanskrit and Bengali literatures both of which are cast in the mould of the Hindu religion, mythology and philosophy. Rabindranath's songs and hymns and his mystic poetry, particularly that in connexion with his great concept of the *Jivana-Devatā* or “Life-Godhead”, are all something transcending the ordinary myths and stories of Hinduism. And yet the artistic beauty and aesthetic value of these myths Rabindranath appreciated in an unprecedented, wonderful way: for example, the great mythical figures of the

gods and goddesses of Hinduism like Siva and Uma (as Gauri, Pārvatī, Kālī etc.) and Sri and Vishnu, Sarasvatī and Brahma, Indra and Karttikeya, Radhā and Krishna. And orthodox Hindus who believe in these divinities as deities who exist in person to receive the homage of men and to share their joys and sorrows and to succour them as living saviours or deliverers, cannot take exception to Rabindranath's treatment of them in his poetry. There is no conflict between Rabindranath the Poet and Lover of these Myths and Legends, and Rabindranath the Thinker and Believer in a Reality which transcends all popular or folk religion and myth. Ample evidence will be found in some of Rabindranath's longer poems composed both in his early life (e.g. the *Sonar Tari*, *Chitrā*, and *Chaitali*, poems like *Mānasa-Sundarī*, *Jivana-devatā*, *Sindhu-Pare*, etc.) and in his young age (like *Hara-hṛide Kālī*, *Maran*, *Hṛidaya-Yamunā* and in some of the poems the *Bhānusiṃha Ṭhākurer Padāvatī*); as well as in many later poems and in scattered lines all through his poetry during his long poetic career. We find the same play of a divine imagination in his own interpretation of some of the great mythological figures like *Urvaśī* and some of the *Mahabharata* and *Purana* characters, as well as in his own new creations redolent with the fragrance and the profundity of formative myths of the highest beauty and power, like the *Chitrā*.

So also Guru Gobind Singh as a Poet and Lover of the Beautiful and the Terrible in Myth and Legend could find an artist's joy in rendering into beautiful literary Hindi of his day the Puranic story of the Devi in her fight with the Demons of Evil and their final destruction by her as Chandi (in his *Chandī-Charittar* and *Chandī-dī Vār*), composed in a pietistic mood, which believers in and worshippers of the Devi, even proclaimed followers of the Sakta cult, could take seriously as compositions of sincere faith, praise and prayer.

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This raises a matter of controversy with regard to Guru Gobind Singh's religious faith or convictions. Orthodox Hindus gene-

rally do not find incompatible the forms of approach to the Divine — as the One Unknown Formless Reality (*Nirguṇa Brahma*), the *Ek Om-kār*, *Sati-Nām*, *Karatā-Purakh*, *Nirabhau*, *Nirawair*, *Akāla-Mūrati Ajūnī Saibham* of Guru Nanak, and the same Formless Supreme also manifesting Itself in the many Forms of diverse Gods and Goddesses (as *Sagūṇa Brahma*), like Devi Chandika, and as Siva, and Brahmā, and Vishnu and his incarnations like Rama and Krishna.

But while Sikh philosophy and religiosity admitted the validity of certain ideologies embodied in the myths as not being against the exclusive faith in a Monistic Godhead, it would not support the faith and ritual for any lesser god or goddess, even though such a god or goddess was identified with the Supreme. According to the older traditions and stories current among the Sikhs, Guru Gobind had performed, with the help of orthodox Brahmans from Ujjain and Banaras, the complete religious ritual of the Vedic *Homa* and the later Hindu Tantric worship with all the complicated paraphernalia and ritual — which had become virtually meaningless to the ordinary Hindu masses (although piously believed to be supremely magical and efficacious). And the deity whom he wanted to propitiate was the form of Uma or Devi or Durga, the Chandika Nayana Devi, who is believed to have sprung from an eye of Devi in the form of Sati. Sati, according to very late Puranic or Tantric legends, died out of anger and mental anguish and torment at the insult to her husband, Siva, the Supreme God by her own father Daksha, who did not understand Siva's greatness, and wanted to humiliate him. And after her death, her body was cut into fifty-one pieces by Vishnu with his discus, and these pieces of Sati's body fell at fifty-one spots of India where were established the fifty-one shrines to the Devi, holiest of holy places in Tantric Hinduism. It is said that Guru Gobind most carefully performed the ritual, which was to end in a human sacrifice, under the directions of a Brahman *guru* Madhava-dasa from Banaras, who failed to convince or impress Guru Gobind himself by his cowardice and want of faith. But as a reward for his devoted performance of this arduous ritual,

extending over several years, at the hill-shrine of Chandika Nayana Devi, so the story went, the Guru could have a vision of the Goddess, who as a special grace gave him her two-edged *khaṇḍā* or broad-sword (or simply touched with her own hand the Guru's own sword, according to another version) and blessed him that he would be invincible in his fights with the evil and tyrannical forces of the Moguls. If this story is to be accepted — and certainly old traditions do not repudiate it, — then Guru Gobind was guilty of a lapse from the strictest Monotheism to the polytheistic Hindu rituals and practices. This matter has become a source of controversy and dispute among Sikhs, particularly from after 1884, and the whole story has now generally been repudiated as false. Others have thought that Guru Gobind had performed the whole ritual of the Vedic *Homa* and the Purano-Tantric worship of Chandika Nayana Devi, only to expose the utter uselessness of such religious ritual. He thoroughly abandoned it, and then in the great *Baisākhī* gathering, he initiated his own ritual of worship or congregational dedication to God — the Sikh Baptism of the *Pahul*. This was one of the simplest and most impressive as well as most easily understandable ceremonies in any religion, in such great contrast to both Vedic *Yajnas* and Puranic Tantric *Pujas* among orthodox Hindus. And this simple ritual established Sikhism as the faith of the *Khālsā* or “the Pure and Released Men” on its firmest foundation. The full historical accounts (with variant forms) of this episode in the life of Guru Gobind, and its most reasonable explanation, with all due deference to both the greatness and the human qualities of Guru Gobind Singh, have been given by Prof. Indu Bhushan Banerji in his *Evolution of the Khalsa* (Vol. II, 2nd edition, Calcutta 1962, pp. 97-108: “The alleged worship of Durga”). I have brought in all this theme because two important sections of the *Dasam Pādshāh-kā Granth*, the *Chañḍī Charittar* and the *Chandī-dī Vār* — gave the poems and hymns admitted to have been composed by Guru Gobind himself, in praise of goddess Chandi or Durga herself. And in the sincerity of devotion, and beauty and vigour of language, an orthodox Hindu writer like Tin-kauri Banerji has accepted them as quite valid, as compositions and expressions of faith

from the Guru as a champion of Hindudom in both its *Saḡuṇa* and *Nirḡuṇa* conceptions of the Divinity. Sikh writers and critics of literature, and translators of these works into English, like Prof. Kartar Singh (1968), have also spoken in most eulogistic terms of the poetic beauty of these works; and they accept them as genuine works of Guru Gobind Singh.

* * * *

A brief but very useful account of the contents of the *Dasam Pādshāh-kā Granth* will be found in the *Homage to Guru Gobind Singh* by Suneet Vir Singh, Jaico Publishing House, Bombay 1966 (pp. 89-97) and in the Bengali book on Guru Gobind Singh by Tin-kauri Banerji, Calcutta, Bengali Year 1325 (1918 A.D.: pp. 216-222). Editions of the complete *Dasam Pādshāh-kā Granth* in both Gurmukkhī and Devanagari characters are also available, as well as separate editions of most of the component books (which are 11 in number), in the Gurmukhī and in some cases in Devanagari script also. English translations of the *Jāp*, the *Akāl Ustati*, the *Bachitra Nāṭak* (a fine edition with Hindi translation and commentary by Dr. Lajwanti Ramakrishna is available), and other works, are to be had. Some of these writings deal exclusively with Hindu myths and legends, about the various *Avatāras* or Incarnation of Vishnu, and about the loves of Krishna and Radha, indicating a great appreciation of the poetic beauty of these Hindu stories.

And there is that unique work in Persian, a genuine composition by Guru Gobind Singh, the *Zafar-Nāmāh*, addressed to Aurangzeb directly, of which there is a good edition—by Acharya Sri Dharmendranath (Jaipur, 1963), which gives the original Persian text in Persian characters and in a transcription in Devanagari, together with Sanskrit, Hindi and English translations of all the 134 verses. There are other editions and translations by eminent Sikh scholars like Dr. Trilochan Singh.

It is not known how much of the poems which are in the

current editions of the *Dasam Pādshāh-kā Granth* are genuine and what works or portions of works are spurious. There is a very great need for a critical edition, where, with the help of modern scholarship all the available manuscripts and printed editions may be properly scrutinised, and a final reasonable text that may be genuinely ascribed to the Guru himself established.

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The *Adi Granth* or *Guru Granth*, compiled by Guru Arjan Dev in 1604 A.D., is one of the great religious scriptures of India and the world. It can be compared with the *Rig-Veda* of Ancient India — although the *Guru Granth*, with its 5874 poems or hymns, is over five times the size of the *Rig-Veda* with its 1018 hymns, with a few apocryphal ones. The *Guru Granth* has now been worthily translated into English in its entirety. The first ever translation is by one of our greatest scholars of Indian religion and philosophy at the present day, Dr. Gopal Singh. It is published in four volumes (first during 1960-1961, by Gur Das Kapur, Delhi: a second edition has subsequently appeared). Dr. Gopal Singh is a fine Sanskrit scholar who knows the Vedantic and Puranic bases of Sikhism in great detail, and he is familiar with *Tasawwuf* and esoteric Islam. At the same time he is thoroughly at home with the medieval Hindi literary and religious atmosphere — the atmosphere of the *Sadhus* or Wandering Mendicants of different sects. He is one of our finest writers of English in India, who understands deeply the mystic spirit of literature in English and other modern languages: e.g., one should mention his beautiful and profound work, the *Anhada Nāda* or “Unstruck Melody”. He has been fittingly honoured by the Indian Government by having been sent out as India’s Ambassador to Bulgaria, and now he is India’s High Commissioner in the Commonwealth country of Guyana. He is also the author of a number of very useful books on Sikhism — his little but precious books on Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh as well as on various aspects of Sikh religion and Sikh mystic and religious poetry are well-known.

It has been a good idea of his to bring out the present translation of Selections from the writings of Guru Gobind Singh, as in the *Dasam Pādshāh-kā Granth*. The value and literary merits of these translations are quite apparent, and they are sure to be well-received. I only wish that Dr. Gopal Singh will be pleased to complete the good work which he has taken up in his competent hands, and, if he can be persuaded to bring out a complete Translation of the *Dasam Pādshāh-kā Granth* as a fitting pendant or termination for his *magnum opus*, his translation of the entire *Guru Granth*, it will not only be something which will delight his friends and admirers, but will also be an indispensable authoritative volume on Sikhism and on the life and personality of one of the greatest Saints and Teachers and Leaders of Men.

Calcutta,
October 9, 1975.

BY THE GRACE OF THE ONE SUPREME
BEING, THE TRUE, THE ENLIGHTENER¹

J Ā P²

(— THE SACRED WORD AS UTTERED BY THE TENTH MASTER —)

*Chhapē Chhanda*³

BY THY GRACE

(1)

He who has neither distinguishing signs nor marks,
nor caste, nor lineage.

He whose form, colour, delineation and distinctive marks,
no one can discern.

He who is the Moveless Being, and beyond limitations,
and is manifested as Light of the Spirit.⁴

He who is the Lord-God of a myriad Indras and is proclaimed
the King of kings.

He who is the Master of the three worlds, of the gods, men
and demons, and of whom every blade of grass and
vegetation proclaims: "not this, not this."

All His names one cannot tell:

So everyone knows Him

from whatever He does.

¹ Also translated thus:

"There is but one God, true and eternal (to be meditated upon)
through the Grace of the Guru."

² One of the morning prayers, dedicated to the many-faceted Supreme.

³ This is the poetic measure in which the original is written.

⁴ Also, 'your light is from your ownself'.

Bhuyang Paryāt Chhand

(2)

Greetings to Thee, O Being beyond Time.
 Greetings to Thee, O Beneficent One.
 Greetings to Thee, O Master without form.
 Greetings to Thee, O One of incomparable Beauty.

(3)

Greetings to Thee, Who hath no garb,
 Greetings to Thee, Who is unaccountable.
 Greetings to Thee, O One without a corporeal frame.
 Greetings to Thee, O One not born.

(4)

Greetings to Thee, O Indestructible One.
 Greetings to Thee, O Indivisible One.
 Greetings to Thee, Who hath no name.
 Greetings to Thee, Who hath no place.

(5)

Greetings to Thee, Whom deeds do not bind.
 Greetings to Thee, Whom religious systems can contain not.
 Greetings to Thee, O Nameless Being.

(6)

Greetings to Thee, O Placeless Being.
 Greetings to Thee, O Unconquerable One.
 Greetings to Thee, Who is unafraid.
 Greetings to Thee, Who can be moved not.

(7)

Greetings to Thee, Who can be humbled not.
 Greetings to Thee, O Infinite One.
 Greetings to Thee, O Thou without beginning.
 Greetings to Thee, O Thou without blemish.

(8)

Greetings to the One who is limitless.
 Greetings to the One who is cleaved not.
 Greetings to the One who is broken not.
 Greetings to the Master of charitable disposition.

(9)

Greetings to the One who is Infinite and beyond count.
 Greetings to Thee, O One and the only One.
 Greetings to Thee, O One and yet many.
 Greetings to Thee, Whom elements bind not.

(10)

Greetings to Thee, O Constant and Moveless One.
 Greetings to Thee, Whom deeds bind not.
 Greetings to Thee, Who wanders not in doubt.
 Greetings to Thee, O One without a homeland.

(11)

Greetings to Thee, O One without a distinctive coat.
 Greetings to Thee, O One without a name.
 Greetings to Thee, O One without desire.
 Greetings to Thee, Whom elements can contain not.
 Greetings to Thee, Whom no one can harm.

(12)

Greetings to Thee, Who Moves not.
 Greetings to Thee, Whom elements give not a form.
 Greetings to Thee, O Invisible One!
 Greetings to Thee, Who grieves never.

(13)

Greetings to Thee, Who has no woes.
 Greetings to the One who is established not (by another).
 Greetings to the One who is honoured by the three worlds.
 Greetings to the One who is the Treasure (of Good).

(14)

Greetings to the One Who is Deepest of the deep.
 Greetings to the One Who is Constant and Moveless.
 Greetings to Him Who is the Master of the three Attributes.¹
 (and yet) not born.

(15)

Greetings to Thee, O Reveller, the Great Enjoyer.
 Greetings to Thee, O Thou well-yoked to all.
 Greetings to Thee, O Thou without colour.
 Greetings to Thee, O Thou that goest never.

(16)

Greetings to Thee, O Unfathomable Thou.
 Greetings to Thee, O Thou that pervadest all.
 Greetings to Thee, O Thou Sustenance of the waters.
 Greetings to Thee, O Thou who leanest on no one.

(17)

Greetings to Thee, O Casteless One, O One without a lineage,
 Greetings to Thee, O Thou without a religious creed.¹
 Greetings to Thee, O Wonder of wonders.

(18)

Hail, all-hail to Thee, O One without a national home.
 Hail, O One without a garb.
 Hail, O One without a place.
 Hail, O One not born of a woman.

(19)

Greetings, O Death of all beings.
 Greetings, O Beneficent Lord of all.
 Greetings to Thee, Who is in all forms.
 Greetings, O King of all.

¹ Virtue or the principle of balance, passion or movement and inertia.

¹ i.e. He identifies Himself with no particular denomination, for He belongs to all.

(20)

Greetings, O Destroyer of all.
 Greetings, O Establisher of all.
 Greetings, O Annihilator of all.
 Greetings, O Sustenance of all.

(21)

Greetings, O Angelic Being.
 Greetings, O Mysterious One.
 Greetings, O One not born,
 (and yet) of matchless Beauty.

(22)

Greetings, O All-pervading One.
 Greetings to Thee, Who permeates all.
 Greetings to Thee, Who loves all.
 Greetings to Thee, Who destroys all.

(23)

Greetings to Thee, O Death of death.
 Greetings to Thee, O Beneficent One.
 Greetings to Thee, O Thou without colour.
 Greetings to Thee, O Deathless One.

(24)

Greetings to Thee, O Mightiest of the mighty.
 Greetings to Thee, O Doer of all doings.
 Greetings to Thee, O Attached Being, involved with all.
 Greetings to Thee, O Ever-detached One.

(25)

Greetings to Thee, O Thou without kindreds.
 Greetings to Thee, O Fearless One.
 Greetings to Thee, O Beneficent One.
 Greetings to Thee, O Master of Mercy.

(26)

Greetings to Thee, O Infinite One.
Greetings to Thee, O Greatest of the great.
Greetings to Thee, O Great Lover.
Greetings to Thee, O the Groom of all.

(27)

Greetings to Thee, the Sucker of all life.
Greetings to Thee, the Sustenance of all.
Greetings to Thee, O Creator of all.
Greetings to Thee, O Destroyer of all.

(28)

Greetings to Thee, O Detached One.
Greetings to Thee, O Great Indulger.
Greetings to the One Who is merciful to all.
Greetings to the One who sustains all.

Chāchri Chhand

BY THY GRACE

(29)

O Thou without form, of incomparable Beauty.
O Moveless One,
O One not born.

(30)

Unaccountable,
Without a garb,
Without a name,
Desireless, and Detached.

(31)

Unthinkable.
All-perfect
Unconquerable,
And Unafraid.

(32)

Honoured in the three words,
The Treasure of treasures,
Master of the three Attributes,
and yet not born.

(33)

Without end,
Without beginning,
Unborn, and self-dependent.

(34)

Unborn;
And without caste.
Not bound by the elements,
And complete in Himself.

(35)

Undestroyable.
Unbreakable.
Unconquerable,
And Unmoved.

(36)

O Deepest of the deep,
The Friend of all,
Without strife,
Without bonds.

(26)

Greetings to Thee, O Infinite One.
 Greetings to Thee, O Greatest of the great.
 Greetings to Thee, O Great Lover.
 Greetings to Thee, O the Groom of all.

(27)

Greetings to Thee, the Sucker of all life.
 Greetings to Thee, the Sustenance of all.
 Greetings to Thee, O Creator of all.
 Greetings to Thee, O Destroyer of all.

(28)

Greetings to Thee, O Detached One.
 Greetings to Thee, O Great Indulger.
 Greetings to the One Who is merciful to all.
 Greetings to the One who sustains all.

Chāchri Chhand

BY THY GRACE

(29)

O Thou without form, of incomparable Beauty.
 O Moveless One,
 O One not born.

(30)

Unaccountable,
 Without a garb,
 Without a name,
 Desireless, and Detached.

(31)

Unthinkable.
All-perfect
Unconquerable,
And Unafraid.

(32)

Honoured in the three words,
The Treasure of treasures,
Master of the three Attributes,
and yet not born.

(33)

Without end,
Without beginning,
Unborn, and self-dependent.

(34)

Unborn;
And without caste.
Not bound by the elements,
And complete in Himself.

(35)

Undestroyable.
Unbreakable.
Unconquerable,
And Unmoved.

(36)

O Deepest of the deep,
The Friend of all,
Without strife,
Without bonds.

(37)

Unthinkable. Unknowable.
Immortal. Unbound.

(38)

O Creator,
O Placeless One,
Infinite, the Great Being.

(39)

Without a blemish.
Without an equal.
Who needs not another's support,
And is comprehended not by thought.

(40)

Unfathomable. Unborn.
Beyond elements.
Uncontaminated.

(41)

Beyond all regions.
Without woes.
Not bound by deeds.
Without superstition.

(42)

Unconquerable. Unafraid.
Moveless. Unfathomable.

(43)

Immeasurable — the Treasure of Good.
Many and yet One.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(44)

Hail, the most Venerable One.
Hail, O Treasure of Good.
Hail, O God of all gods.
Hail, O Garbless, Unfathomable One.

(45)

Hail, O Death of death.
Hail, O Sustenance of all.
Hail, O All-pervading One.
Hail the One who is all over, in every world.

(46)

Hail, O One without limbs, without a master.
Hail, O One without equal, O Destroyer of all.
Hail, O Sun of suns, the most Venerable One.

(47)

Hail, O Moon of moons, O Light of the suns.
Hail, O Melody of music, Voice of the tune.
Hail, O Rythm of the dance.

(48)

Hail, O Harmony of the melody.
Hail, O Liquidity of waters, O Movement of the winds.

(49)

Hail, O One without limbs, O One without a name.
Hail, O One of whole Form.
Hail, O Destroyer of destroyers.

(50)

Hail, O One in whom all elements are contained.
Hail, O One without blemish; the Embodiment of stainlessness.
Hail, O King of kings,
O Super-form,

(51)

Hail, O Yogi of yogis, the Supreme *Siddha*.
Hail, O King of kings, Glorious and Great.

(52)

Hail, O One who holds Weapons in His Hands.
Hail, O One who enjoys his arms.¹
Hail, O Supreme Knower.
Hail, O Mother of the universe.

(53)

Hail, O One without garbs, without superstition.
Hail, O Detached One, whom no one can ravish.
Hail, O Yogi of yogis, Master of the Great Way.

(54)

Hail, O Ever-present God : The Doer of fearsome deeds.
Hails, O One who blesses even ghosts and angels with Religion.

(55)

Hail, O Destroyer of maladies, Embodiment of compassion.
Hail, O King of kings, O Master of masters.

(56)

Hail, O Greatest Giver, who blesses us with Honour.
Hail, O Malady of Maladies, O Pure One.

(57)

Hail, O *Mantra* of *mantras*; O Charm of charms,
Hail, O Deity of deities; O *Tantra* of *tantras*.

(58)

Hail, O Truth-Consciousness-Bliss, Destroyer of all,
Hail, O Formless One, of exquisite Beauty.
Hail, O One who is everywhere, alike.

(59)

Hail, O One who ever increases our wisdom, our occult powers.
Hail, O Destroyer of sins.

¹ *Shastar* is the weapon that is held in hand, *Astar* the one that is thrown like a disc.

(60)

Hail, O Sublime, Supreme God of gods, Giver and Sustainer.
Hail, O Thou who art Compassionate and Givest to all.

(61)

Hail, O Garbless One, Unpierced, Nameless and without Desire.
Hail, O One who lives in all places, and defeats
even the mightiest.

THROUGH THY POWER

Chāchri Chhand

(62)

On the waters and on the earth.
Fear-free, and Inscrutable.

(63)

Immovable, The Master of all.
Without a country, without a garb,
Thou art.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(64)

Hail to Thee, O Unfathomable One, Unbound, Embodiment of
Bliss
Whom everyone honours,
And Who is the Treasure of all.

(65)

Hail to Thee, O One who has no overlord.
Hail to Thee, O One who is the Destroyer of all.
Hail to the Indestructible One.
Hail to the Undestroyable One.

(66)

Hail to the Immortal One.
 Hail to the Self-dependent One.
 Hail to the All-pervading One.
 Hail to the One who is in all garbs.

(67)

Hail to the King of kings.
 Hail to the One who bedecks all.
 Hail to the Overlord of all.
 Hail to the Light of the moon.

(68)

Hail to the Melody in all music.
 Hail to the Lover of lovers.
 Hail to the Wrathful One, the Destroyer, the Sucker.

(69)

Hail the Creator of maladies.
 Hail the One who enjoys all.
 Hail the Conqueror of all.
 Hail the One who strikes fear (in all).

(70)

Hail the Supreme Teacher of all in Sublime Wisdom.
 Hail the Melody of melodies.
 Hail the *Mantra* of *mantras*.
 Hail the Charm of charms.

(71)

Hail the One who attracts and cares for everyone.
 Hail the One Who is in all forms,
 The Master of the three Attributes, and yet without
 form.

(72)

Hail, O Life of all life.
 Hail, O Seed of all seeds.
 Who, Ever-profound and Calm, •

Never contaminated, and unattached,
Is yet Compassionate to all,
O Thou !

(73)

O Embodiment of Compassion,
O Destroyer of Sin:
O ever, all over, of all,
The Repository of all miracles, all bounties,
O Thou!

*Charpat Chhand*BY THY GRACE

(74)

O Thou of immaculate Deeds!
O Thou of the unbreakable Law!
O Thou of the 'whole' Yoga¹!
O Thou, the Moveless Reveller!

(75)

O Eternal rule,
Of Establishment ever-the-same,
The Master of the Higher Law,
Of Deeds unknowable,
O Thou!

(76)

O, the Giver of all.
O, the Knower of all.
O Sun, the Light of all hearts,
Whom everyone acknowledges as his very own.

(77)

Thou art the life of all life.
The Power of all power.
The Reveller in all,
And well-yoked to all,
O Thou.

¹ i.e. the integral and not partial kind of yoga.

(78)

O Angel of angels,
 Our inmost Secret,
 The death-dealing God,
 And the Sustenance of all,
 O Thou.

Ruāl Chhand

BY THY GRACE

(79)

He, the First Person, the Being beyond Time, not cast
 into the womb, the Limitless One;
 Who Decks all, and Blesses with graces the three
 words, the Mysterious and Compassionate One since
 beginning;
 Who Sustains all, and Drives all to effort, and then
 Destroys all;
 Who is here and also there, the Detached One, whose Beauty
 has all the graces.

(80)

Who has no name, no place, no caste, nor form, nor colour,
 nor sign.
 Yea, the First Person, the Embodiment of Compassion, not born
 from the womb, and Perfect,
 is the beginning of all.
 Who has no nationality, no dress, no form, no distinctive
 marks, no attachment.
 And who, here as well as there, and in all directions, has
 spread out as Love.

(81)

Without a name, Without desire, who seems without a fixed
 abode,
 And who is the Pride, the Decorator of all, and whom everyone
 acknowledges as his own.

One and yet who seems many, and enters into a myriad forms,
And plays His Play, and then winds it up, and becomes
the One again!

(82)

His Mystery is known to none: neither to the Veda nor to the
Semitic texts.
How is one to identify Him when He has neither form,
nor colour, nor caste, nor clan,
And, has neither father nor mother, and is neither born nor
dies, but the Disc of whose Power circles fast round
the three worlds and is acknowledged by them all?

(83)

He, on whom dwell men of the earth and the fourteen spheres,
Who is the First God, the beginningless Being, who
establishes all.
The Supreme Being, Immaculate, the whole Man and Infinite.
Himself Self-existent, who has created the entire universe
and is also the Destroyer of all.

(84)

Deathless, yoked to His Law, the Immortal One, my greetings
to Him.
Who is without a denomination, station or illusion, above the
elements, Unknowable and without a distinguishing
dress.
Who has neither attachment, nor a distinctive colour,
nor caste, nor clan, nor name,
And Who destroys the tyrant and his pride, and Whose
function is to emancipate all.

(85)

He is only but Himself, the Profound One, beyond praise,
the only One, *Detached*.
The Destroyer of ego, the Death of all, the First Person,
Unborn.

Without limbs, undestroyable, 'body-less,'
 the only One, Infinite.
 Who is the Cause of causes, and Who also sustains and
 destroys all.

(86)

And, Who is the All-knower, the Annihilator, and
 yet is detached from all.
 Yea, His form, or colour, or sign, no *Sastra* can delineate.
 Of Him, all the high *Vedas* and the *Puranas* ever utter:
 "Not this, not this,"
 And the Smirtis too; nor any one can visualise Him
 through the mind.

Madhubhār Chhand

BY THY GRACE

(87)

Our God of infinite Praise,
 of indescribable Virtues:
 Whose Seat is unbreakable, and Who is praised as Formless.

(88)

Who is born of Himself and Who will be destroyed never.
 Who is the King of kings, Powerful and of long Arms,

(89)

The Angel of angels, the Sun of suns, the King of kings,
 infinite is whose Glory.

(90)

Who is the Indra of Indras, most innocent of children,
 Poorest of the poor, and Death of death.

¹ Lit. 'soul-less' or 'self-less'.

(91)

Whose Glory is indestructible, whose Limbs defy the elements,
Whose Extent and Condition can only be termed, 'Infinite.'
He is of limitless Praise.

(92)

The men of silence praise Thee, O Fearless One, without
desire, whose Light dazzles, and whose Expanse and
Condition are indivisible.

(93)

Whose Functions are effortless, ideal is whose Law, Who
Filleth all, the Treasure of treasures, and Whose
Majesty no one can challenge.

Chāchri Chhand

BY THY GRACE

(94)

The Master of the earth. Emancipator. Compassionate. Infinite.

(95)

The Destroyer. The Doer. Without a name. Without desire.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(96)

He is the Creator of four directions and also the Destroyer,
Who is Compassionate to all directions, and whom every side
acknowledges (as its own).

(97)

Who directs and fills all directions, and projects
and sustains all, and then levels up all.

(98)

Who is on all sides, who lives in every corner, to whom
everyone pays obeisance and who knows and blesses
all.

Chāchri Chhand

(99)

Neither has He an enemy, nor a friend.
Neither is He afflicted by doubt, nor sense of fear.

(100)

He is without form, without the effect of deeds,
Unborn, and not cast into the womb.

(101)

Unvisualised, unsupported by another.
Farthest of far, Immaculate and Pure.

(102)

The Master of the earth. Unseen. Invisible. Undrawable.

Bhagvati Chhand

BY THY GRACE

(103)

Thy 'country' is broken up never, nor Thy 'dress' ever
contaminated.

Thy Deeds are indestructible, Thy 'illusion' unbreakable,
O of Eternal Abode,

(104)

Who may even withdraw the splendour of the sun:
Yea, He the One Who is described as Ever-detached and
the Creator of all elements.

(105)

The Glory of the kings, O Thou.
The Flag of Religion, O Thou,
O One never in pain and Who filleth all.

(106)

O Creator of the universe.
O Warrior of warriors.
Self-existent, of incomparable Beauty.

(107)

Thou art our One and the only God.
Yea, the First God, without a peer.
Mysterious, beyond form,
and dependent upon Thyself alone.

(108)

Thou givest sustenance to all,
O Compassionate One, the Emancipator,
Immaculate and Sinless,
The Mystery within a mystery.

(109)

Destroyer of all sins,
and King of kings,
The Cause of all causes,
and the Provider of all.

(110)

All-mercy, the Giver of sustenance.
The Fountain of Grace.
The All-powerful One,
And, also, the Destroyer of all.

(111)

Everyone acknowledges Thee, O God,
And, Thou Knowest and Givest to all.
Permeating everything,
and Ever-present, all over.

(112)

In every country and continent.
In every dress Thou art.
Thy Rule is over all,
And Thou createst all.

(113)

O Giver of all,
O Thou, Who absorbest all in Himself.
O Glory of all, O Splendour, O Grace.

(114)

Is there a place without Thee?
Or a garb? O Sustainer of all!
O All-death!

(115)

Thou levellest all, destroyest all,
Thou enterest all forms,
and lookest in every direction.

(116)

Thy Domain is over all,
All deeds are done through Thee.
Thou driest up all,
and then bringest back the spring.

(117)

O, the Vital-breath of all.
O, the Power of all.
O Thou, who art in all, all over.

(118)

Thou art acknowledged all over.
Thou art eternally the Supreme Master of all.
Thou establishest all,
And everyone worshipping Thee.

(119)

O Sun, whose Light illumines all,
Thou art accepted, all over, as the Supreme God,
and, also, as the cooling Moon.

(120)

O, Great Utterer,
O, All-wise One:
The Fount of Wisdom and of Knowledge,
and the Master of the Muse.

(121)

O, Embodiment of Beauty,
Who attracts and is attracted by all.
I greet Thee ever,
Whose progeny dies never.

(122)

Thou layest low Thine enemies,
And savest the poor:
O, of High Station,
the Ruler of Time and Space.

(123)

O Master of Culture,
Whose Treasure is open to all,
Thou, the All-powerful Adversary,
And the sure Sustenance of the universe!

(124)

O Master of many moods,
Mysterious, Indivisible,
O Blessor of Thy lovers,
And the destruction of Thine enemies.

(125)

Whose Form is indescribable,
Whose Elements are not subject to the three Attributes.¹
Whose Glory is magnificent,
Thou alone art our nectar, well-yoked (to life).

¹ Goodness or balance, Passion or movement, darkness or inertia.

(126)

Eternal is whose Form,
 of incomparable Beauty. Unpierceable.
 The Defeat of all, and also their Glory.

(127)

Ever-greetings to Thee, O God,
 Who is ever without desire,
 Unshackled is whose Form (by Time or Space).
 Profound and Deep, and of indescribable Praise.

(128)

Aum, O beginningless Beginning,
 O, The First of beginnings.
 Without limbs, without a name,
 The Destroyer of the three worlds,
 And also their Fulfiller.

(129)

Destroyer of the three Maladies,¹
 Blessor of the three Boons,²
 Undestroyable, Most Profound,
 The Creator of Good Circumstance for all,
 and the Great Lover of all.

(130)

Of Form that enjoys the three worlds,
 Unbroken, Uncontaminated,
 The Destroyer of hell,
 And the Inheritor of the earth.

(131)

Unutterable is Thy glory,
 Ever, and for ever.
 Of Detached Form, and yet well-yoked,
 O, of incomparable Charm!

¹ i.e. three Gunas, already explained before on p. 21.

² Religion, worldly weal, emancipation.

(132)

Whoever can utter Thy Praise,
 O Detached Glory?
 Indescribable is Thy Form,
 And yet Thou art yoked to us all,
 O Magnificent Splendour!

Chāchri Chhand

(133)

Unbreakable. Without limbs.
 Without garb. Beyond count.

(134)

Without doubt. Beyond the fruits of deeds.
 Without beginning. The Beginning of the beginning

(135)

Unconquerable. Ever-the-same.
 Not formed by the elements,
 And Unmoved.

(136)

Undestroyable and Detached.
 Without (involvement), and without bonds.

(137)

Thou art Ever-perfect,
 The Detached One,
 Who goest never,
 and art the Embodiment of Light.

(138)

Without care. Ever-the-same.
 Indescribable,
 And Unseen.

(139)

Unaccountable,
 And without a garb.
 Not corroded by Time,
 And the Most Deep.

(140)

Unborn.

Unknowable.

Immaculate.

And without beginning.

(141)

Unestablished,

Who is also forever.

Without caste,

Emancipated,¹

and free.

Charpat Chhand

BY THY GRACE

(142)

O, Destroyer of all.

O, Ever-present, all over.

O, All-known.

O, Knower of all.

(143)

O, Creator of all.

O, the Death of all.

O, the Vital-breath of all.

O, the Power of all.

(144)

Thou art in all deeds,

All religions and orders,

Attached to all,

And the Emancipator of all.

Rasāval Chhand

By Thy Grace

(145)

Greetings, O Destroyer of hell.

¹ Also, 'Thy glory is indestructible'.

Greetings, O Eternal Light,
O Form, O Formlessness,
Whose Elements are indivisible.¹

(146)

O Destroyer of destroyers,
Thou art ever with everyone.
Thy Form is most subtle,
And, Thou art bound not by the elements.

(147)

Without limbs, without a name.
Fulfiller of the three worlds, and also their Destroyer.
Whose Presence cannot be broken.
The All-powerful, All-beauty.

(148)

Without sons, and grandsons.
Without an enemy, or a friend.
Without a father, without a mother.
Without a caste, without a creed.

(149)

Related, and yet unrelated,
Most Profound and Infinite.
Thy Glory is eternal.
Yea, Thou art Self-existent,
and never humbled.

Bhagvati Chhand

(150)

Thou art the Presence.
Thou art Here and Now.
Hail, hail to Thee, all hail, O Ever-present One,
Whose Utterance is the same for everyone.²

¹ Also translated as 'Unborn' or 'from the beginning'.

² Also rendered as 'everyone talks of Thee'.

(151)

Thou hast a Master-mind.
Thy Light informs all beauty.
O Perfect, Compassionate one,
Who provides all in His Mercy.

(152)

Thou art the Giver of our daily bread,
Yea, the Sustainer for ever :
How All-pervasive is Thy Grace!
O, One of dazzling Splendour.

(153)

O Thou Destroyer of Thine enemies,
And Decorator of the poor.
The Breaker of Thy opposites,
And the Wiper of fear.

(154)

Thou forgivest our blemishes,
And art present at all places.
Thou art defeated by no enemy,
O Compassionate Provider of the poor.

(155)

Thy Tongue Utters the same for all,
Our Most Blessed Master,
Whose function is to destroy Hell,
And who lives ever in the Paradise (of His own Presence).

(156)

Thou goest out in all directions,
Thou spreadest out ever and forever more..
How exquisitely cultured art Thou,
(That everyone is equally dear to Thee!)

(157)

O God of gods, the Master of all, since the beginning,

Ever-the-same for everyone.
Without a nation art Thou, and beyond words,
And, also, without a garb.

(158)

Thou art the Master of the earth, the sky,
Thou art the Master of the Faith.
Of utter Compassion,
And of Beauteous Courage.¹

(159)

Thy Light is constant:
Thy Fragrance is limitless.
O Thou, the Embodiment of Wonder,
Infinite are the Elements that make Thee.

(160)

How utterly vast is Thy Expanse,
O Glory of our Souls.
O Moveless, Limbless One,
Infinite and Undivided,
O Thou!

Madhubhār Chhand

BY THY GRACE

(161)

Greet Thee ever the men of silence:
Thy Merits are constantly praised.
No enemy's power can destroy Thee,
For Thou, O Powerful God, art indestructible.

(162)

I greet Thee endlessly.
Greet Thee all the pure ones.
O indivisible God of Power,
Whose Strength no one can challenge.

¹ i.e. His courage is not reckless,

(163)

O Immortal God, of Himself born,
Who is the Light of the detached ones,
Greetings to Thy endless merits,
Who is ever present on the earth, as in waters

(164)

Thy Parts no one can destroy.
Thy Seat is moveless.
And Thy Praises limitless,
And Thy Compassion beyond comprehension.

(165)

Glorious art Thou over land and sea,
Yea, derided not in any direction of the universe,
And, the Overlord of all that is,
And, considered Infinite, all over.

(166)

Thou, The Indestructible, art realized in our inmost selves.
Thou art the Support and the Centre of the earth:
Thou art with long Arms,
Yea, Thou art the same eternally.

(167)

The One and the only God since the beginning,
Whose Praises are countless,
Whose Thought drives out all thoughtlessness.
O All-powerful Guru, O Immortal One.

(168)

Is there a home that greets Thee not?
Who keeps not thy Name, Thy Feet, in its mind?
Yea, Thy condition is ever the same,
O, there is nothing low about Thee.

(169)

Uninvolved, without affliction, is Thy State.

And Thy Treasure is exhausted never.
O Unestablished and Limitless One!

(170)

Invisible and Subtle is Thy Law:
But confirmed are Thy deeds.
Yea, Thou art endless and unharmed and whole,
O Ever-giver, my Overlord!

Harbolmanā Chhand

BY THY GRACE

(171)

O Compassionate One,
The Destroyer of Thine enemies,
And the Annihilator of the unwise:
And the Embellisher of the earth,

(172)

O God of the universe,
O our Transcendent Lord,
The Creator of strife,
And yet the Emancipator of all.

(173)

Thou art the Support of the earth,
And the Creator of the universe.
Thou art pleasing to the mind,
And ever-known all over.

(174)

Thou art the Filler of all,
And the Creator,
And the Support of all,
Also, the Destroyer of all.

(175)

O Master of Compassion,
The Filler of the universe,
The God of everyone,
And the Lord of the earth.

(176)

Thou pervadest the egg-shaped universe,
And destroyest all unwisdom,
O, Thou, the Compassionate One,
And farthest of far.

(177)

No one can establish Thee, O God,
Nor utter Thee, O Unutterable One.
Thou art not created by another,
And art the Nectar of nectars.

(178)

Thou art the Essence of the nectars.
The Self-existent Embodiment of Compassion.
Uncaused in Thy Creative Being,
And, the Support of the earth.

(179)

O Thou boundless God,
O Thou God of gods,
O Thou who art not another's creation,
O Thou Quintessence of the Waters of Immortality.

(180)

O Thou Creator of wonders,
O Thou Sweetest of sweet,
O Thou Master of man,
O Thou Destroyer of the unwise!

(181)

O Thou Filler of the universe.
O Compassionate One,
O King of kings,
O Provider of all.

(182)

O Thou Destroyer of fear,
And of the enemies of man,

Who givest pain to His opposites,
And art the only One worthy of Praise.

(183)

O Thou without blemish,
O Thou Creator of all creation,
O Thou Builder of all,
O Thou Destroyer of all!

(184)

Thou art our Oversoul,
Yea, the Soul of all,
Who art chained to our Souls,
And who givest meaning to Praise.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(185)

Greetings, O Sun of suns,
Greetings, O Moon of moons,
Greetings, O King of kings,
Greetings, O Angel of angels.
Greetings, O Abysmal Darkness,¹
Greetings, O Light of all lights.
Greetings, O Wholeness of the whole,
Greetings, O Seed of seeds.

(186)

Greetings, O Master of passion, inertia, peace.
Greetings, O Supreme Real, beyond elements.
Greetings, O Yogi of yogis, O Wisdom of the wise.
Greetings, O Mantra of mantras, O Concentration of the
concentrated.

(187)

Greetings, O Warrior of warriors, Wisdom of wisdoms.
Greetings, O Sustenance of foods, O Wetness of waters.
Greetings, O Creator of strife.
Greetings, O Embodiment of Peace.
Greetings, O God of gods, without beginning,
O Treasure of treasures!

¹ Being omnipotent, God is the source of both light and darkness, but
He fights the forces of darkness.

(188)

Thou art the Creator, The Embodiment of power,
 The Praise of praises.
 Greetings, O Hope of hopes,
 O Beauty of beauties,
 Whose Form is indestructible, without limbs, without a name,
 Without desire, Destroyer of the three worlds, through
 past, present and future.

Ēk Achhri Chhand

(189)

Unborn. Undying.
 Of fear free. Ever the same,
 O Thou.

(190)

Not cast into the womb,
 Nor destroyed ever,
 (Who vaults, all over, like) the sky.

(191)

Unbreakable. Unpierceable.
 Unknowable. Undissolved.

(192)

Beyond Time. Compassionate.
 Unaccountable. Without a garb.

(193)

Without a name. Without desire.
 Profound and Uncorroded.

(194)

Not-dependent, the Destroyer of all.
 Subject not to transmigration,
 Thou art silenced never.

(195)

Uninvolved, without colour,
 Without form, without sign.

(196)

Subject not to the effect of deeds. Without doubt.
Unaccountable, and Indestructible,

O Thou!

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(197)

Hail, all-hail to Thee,
O Destroyer of all;
Indestructible and nameless art Thou,
Who abidest ever the same all over;
Whose Substance is informed not by desire,
And whose Form is ever the same for all:
Who art the Destroyer of misdeeds,
And the Treasure of the Good and Eternal Law.

(198)

Eternal, True and the Embodiment of Bliss,
Thou art the Destroyer of Thy opposites;
Compassionate and Blessor,
Who livest in all, alike, all over:
Whose Substance is Wonder,
Thou art terrible to the tyrant.
Yea, the Destroyer and the Creator,
and yet the Master of Mercy.

(199)

In all the four directions art Thou, enjoying everywhere,
Self-existent, Holy, ever-yoked to all.
Above birth, above death.¹
The Embodiment of Compassion,
Who art ever with us, and Whose Substance is never destroyed,
O Thou!

¹ Also: 'The Destroyer of birth and death'.

IN THE PRAISE OF GOD, THE IMMORTAL

AKĀL USTATI¹

My only Refuge is my God, the Timeless Being,
Who is All-steel,
All-death,
All-power.
May He protect me ever!

BY THY GRACE

Chaupai (1-10)

(1)

Hail, our Primal God,
Who pervades the earth, the waters and the interspace.
The First Person, Formless and Deathless,
Whose Light is manifest in the fourteen spheres.

(2)

He is as much in the elephant as in the ant.
He looks upon the rich and the poor alike.
Non-dual, Unknowable, not torn by Doubt,
And the Inner-knower of all hearts is He.

¹ Or, the Praises of the one immortal God. Besides the graceful, beneficent aspect of God, the Guru here dwells also upon His dreadful aspect as the destroyer of evil. In this chapter are also condemned and ridiculed, without mercy, the many superstitious acts and beliefs that men practise in the name of religion.

(3)

Indestructible is He, beyond comprehension,
 without a distinctive coat,
 Without form, without sign, without colour, without passion:
 He is above every kind of caste-marks,
 Yea, He, the Primal Being, stainless and without a second.

(4)

Neither caste has He, nor colour, nor sign,
 Neither friend, nor foe, neither father nor mother.
 Farthest of far, yet nearest of near,
 Who lives on the earth as in waters and the interspace.

(5)

Boundless His Form, subtle His Speech,
 The Refuge of whose Feet is sought even by the 'goddess of
 power'.
 And whose limits are known not to Brahma¹ or Vishnu².
 For, says the Brahma too: "Not this, Not this."

(6)

He it is who created myriads of Indras³ and Vamans⁴,
 And also Brahma and Shiva⁵ — and then destroyed them He.
 The fourteen spheres manifest but His play,
 And then merges them He all in Himself.

(7)

He made countless demons, angels and *sesnagas*⁶,
 And the heavenly musicians and *Yakshas*⁷, gracious and handsome.
 He knows the story of the present, past and future:
 Yea, He is the Inner-knower of each part of every heart.

^{1,2} & ⁵ The three gods of the Hindu trinity, creator, preserver & destroyer respectively.

³ God of Hindu heaven, also of rain.

⁴ Diminutive incarnation of Vishnu.

⁶ The 1000-headed serpent, king of the underworld, who spreads out his shade on the face of Vishnu, according to the Puranas.

⁷ A special category of angels who serve Kubera, the god of wealth.

(8)

He has neither father, nor mother, caste, nor clan,
And stays not attached to a single movement.
He is reflected in the light of all souls.
Yea, He is recognised by all, all over.

(9)

Deathless is He : beyond the sway of Time,
The Imperceptible Being, without form, and Detached.
Without colour, and distinctive marks, and caste and family,
The Eternal Being, not corroded by age, and of one Mind

(10)

He is the Death of all, also the Life of all,
The Destroyer of Sorrow and Sickness and Sin.
He who dwells upon Him even once with a whole mind,
He falls not a prey to the ravages of Time.

BY THY GRACE

KABITAS (11-20)

(1)

Now Thou art Conscious as to embellish
even consciousness,

And then, Thou seemest Unconscious and Care-free
and Asleep.

Here, Thou playest the role of a beggar,
and there, of the great Giver who only but giveth.

Now, Thou bestowest infinite gifts upon the kings
of kings,

And, then, Thou takest away all that Thou givest.

Now attached to the Veda-conduct, now a dissenter,
now devoid of the three Modes, now invested
with all Good art Thou!

(2)

Here, Thou art a heavenly singer, a matchless instrumentalist,
a *Yaksha*, the Wise One, and there a snake, a ghost
or a goblin.

Here, Thou art a Hindu dwelling, in silence,
upon the *Gayatri*,¹ and there a Turk shouting
out your call to prayer.

Now, Thou art attached as a pundit to the Puranas,
and then Thou findest the final word in the
Quran.

Now attached to the Veda-conduct, now a dissenter,
now devoid of the three Modes, now invested
with all Good art Thou.

¹ The basic Hindu mantram in praise of the sun-god. This mantram
can be recited only by the high-caste Hindus.

(3)

At one place, one finds Thee amidst gods, at another
 Thou fillest the mind of demons with ego.
 At one place, Thou bestowest his station upon Indra,
 at another Thou takest it away from him.
 Now, Thou thinkest of unthinkable thoughts, now a
 doting husband art Thou, now an adulterer!
 Now attached to the Veda-conduct, now a dissenter,
 now devoid of the three Modes, now invested
 with all Good art Thou.

(4)

Now, Thou art in arms, now dwelling upon knowledge,
 now feeding upon air, now a companion of beauty.
 Now, Thou art the speech of angels, the goddess of
 learning, then the goddess of power and death,
 now blue-hued, now white.
 Now establishing religion, practising continence, and
 then lustful; now here, now there, now a giver,
 now a taker.
 Now submitting to the Veda-conduct, now a dissenter,
 now devoid of the three Modes, now invested
 with all Good art Thou.

(5)

Now, Thou wearest matted hair, now a necklace like a
 celibate, now a yogi art Thou, now an anchorite.
 Now ear-torn, now a sanyasin,
 now walking upon the earth, care-worn, lest
 thou destroy life.
 Now, Thou art a soldier practising Thy weapons,
 and, like a Kashatriya, killing
 Thy opposites, and welcoming death.
 Now, O King, Thou slayest the enemies of the glorious
 earth, and, then, fulfillest all a man demands.

(6)

Now tellest Thou the meaning of music,
 now a master-painter or a dancer art Thou.
 Thou tastest now like nectar, like honey,
 or sugarcane, now seemest Thou drunk like a
 drunkard.
 Now a great warrior smiting
 thine enemies, and now an angel of angels.
 Now, Thou art a beggar in dire distress,
 and now a detached man of Wisdom,
 now the earth, new the sun.

(7)

Now, Thou art blemishless, like the air, the moon,
 the very essence of Purity, and now abed with beauty.
 Now, Thou followest the way of angels, now of an
 ascetic,
 now doer of misdeeds, now in a righteous mood.
 Here, Thy food is air, there knowledge,
 Now Thou art a yogi, a celibate, now a man,
 now a woman.
 Now, Thou art a canopied king, now a mendicant, here a
 beauteous youth, a splendour, there just an illusion!

(8)

O Thou Supreme Songster, O Player on the flute,
 O Superb Dancer,
 O man, O Formless Being!
 O Word of the Vedas, O text on sex, O king, O queen,
 O of woman's form!
 O Vina-player, O grazer of cows,
 O stealer of butter¹, O youthful beauty,
 O edge of Purity, O life of Holiness,
 O Giver, O Great Gift, O Compassionate,
 Formless God!

¹ All these are attributes of Lord Krishna.

(9)

- O Formless God, O Man of Beauty, O King of kings,
 O Giver, O Great Gift,
 O Saviour of our Souls,
 the Blesser of material bliss,
O Destroyer of Sorrow, O our greatest Pride:
 O Treasure of Knowledge, O Presence without a second,
 O Embodiment of extra-psychic powers, O Purity
 of the pure.
O Trapper of beauty, O Death of death,
 O Terror of Thine enemies, O Life of friends!

(10)

- Now, discoursest Thou on Brahma, then takest knowledge to
 be a mere involvement, now the melody in music,
 now, a perfect devotee.
Now, Thy way is of the Vedas and Thou lovest
 learning, now Thou art the established path, now
 the chaos, now the flame of fire.
Now a lone meditator, now perfect glory,
 now an ascetic, now fallen
 from the way of yoga.
Now blessest, now cursest Thou,
 yet in all ages, all over,
 Thou art no other, but the same!

TEN SWAIYYAS

(1)

I've wandered through the world of the puritan Jainas,
and numberless siddhas, yogis and the celibates;
And the brave demons, and the angels feasting on pure nectar,
and the holy ones of various creeds:
I've seen the whole world of man but seen not a man of
God, the life of all life.
Without a touch of His Loving-kindness and Grace, man is
worth only but a trite!

(2)

They who possessed proud elephants with golden trappings,
incomparable, tall, painted with bright colours;
And myriads of horses, bounding like deer, racing faster
than the wind:
Such powerful emperors to whom kings paid obeisance in
countless numbers.
But it availed them not howso great they were, for,
in the end, they departed, barefooted, from the world!

(3)

They who conquered many countries and whose drums were
beat to proclaim their authority,
Whose gorgeous elephants trumpeted loud, and countless
steeds of noble breed neighed in their stables:
O who can count their number in the past, present and
future? How many of them came and disappeared?
For, whosoever dwelt not on the one Supreme God, in the
end he came to an inglorious end.

(4)

Men bathe at pilgrim-stations, give away money in charity,
and practise special disciplines.

They dwell upon the Vedas, the Puranas, the Quran and
other Semitic texts; yea, they search heaven and
earth for spiritual comfort.

Fasting men of continence, and of knowledge and clean
thought, too, I've seen.

But, dedicating not to God, even for a moment, not even
a kingly station is of avail to any.

(5)

Trained soldiers, of terrible prowess, accoutred with
coats of mail, who'd smite their enemies.

Full of ample pride, they would put the mountains to
flight, themselves unshaken.

They'd tear their adversaries, twist their pride, and
smother the fury of the wild elephants.

But, without the Mercy of our Supreme God, they'd depart
from the world, sad, in the end.

(6)

Countless heroes there are, powerful and irresistible,
who face the sword clean without a moment's thought.

They lay waste many lands and crush their adversaries,
and humble the pride of furious elephants.

They break the resistance of powerful forts,
even their confident resolution is enough to
shatter the enemy in every direction.

But the King, our great Master, is the only Giver,
though the supplicants at His Door are many.

(7)

Be it present, past or future,

God alone is worshipped by gods and even
demons, *sesnagas* and ghosts.

(For), as many are the living creatures on earth, or
in waters, all were created by God in a single
creative sweep.

Their victory resounds with the rise of their
 sense of good, and destroyed are (through them)
 countless sinners.

O men, happy only is the Saint in the world:
 and, seeing him, the enemies of God will
 forsure go down.¹

(8)

Men, Indras, rulers of the three worlds, masters
 of elephants,
 And they who perform countless ablutions, and give
 away elephants in charity, and marry their
 choice brides at gorgeous swayyambas:²
 Not only they, but even Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva and
 Indra will in the end be trapped by death.
 But, they who cherish the Feet of God, the Master
 of all treasures, they'd assume not a body (of desire) again.

(9)

What if you close your eyes, and, like a crane,
 sit in meditation,
 And bathe at the seven seas? You lose, thiswise,
 the merit both of here and the Hereafter.
 You live in sin, and pass your life thus in vain.
 Hear ye all, I utter nothing but Truth, that he alone
 attaineth God, who loveth.

(10)

Some worship but stocks and stones, others wear a
 *lingam*³ on their necks.
 Some recognise God in the South, others bow to the West.
 Some ignorant wretches worship images,
 others even worship the dead.
 But, the whole world is involved with a false show:
 for, man finds not, thiswise, the Mystery
 that is God.

¹ Lit. burn in envy.

² a beauty-parade of princes and warriors held in ancient times for the beauties of the realm to pick on their bridegrooms.

³ Shiva's symbol (male organ) of procreation worshipped by Shaivites.

AKAL USTATI

(continued)

BY THY GRACE

Laghunirāj Chhand

(51)

God is in the waters and upon the earth,
In the heart as in the forest :

(52)

Over the high mountains as in the deep caves,
Across the skies, as upon land.

(53)

Here, as well as there,
In the world, as in the yond.

(54)

Unaccountable and without a garb,
Not subject to pain,
and the enemy of no one !

(55)

Above Time. Unsustained (by another),
Unpierceable and Mysterious.

(56)

Not attained through charms, or verbal formulas or diagrams.
Yea, He is the Most Magnificent Splendour.

(57)

Without a caste, Without a pedigree,
Without a friend, without a mother.

(58)

Healthful and whole and without sorrow:
Not subject to Doubt, or the fruits of deeds.

(59)

Unconquerable. Unafraid.
Mysterious and Inscrutable.

(60)

Not subject to punishment, or blackmail,
Indivisible and ever Effulgent.

(61)

The Supreme One and Mysterious,
Unconquerable, Unpierceable,
art Thou.

(62)

Meditate upon Him, thy God,
Yea, worship and utter and suffer austerities for
Him alone.

(63)

Thou, O God, art in the waters as upon land.
Thou art the river, Thou the water-god.

(64)

In the trees as in the leaves,
One the earth as in the heavens
art Thou.

(65)

I dwell only upon Thee,
Nay, not upon another.
I worship Thee alone.
Thee alone I utter.

(66)

Thou art the Master of the earth
as of the heavens,
Yea, Thou art the Place,
And, Thou the only One that Abideth.

(67)

Unborn, and unafraid.
Undeified, and never destroyed.

(68)

Thou alone art my chastity,
My fasting, my deliverance, the Only incarnation for me.¹

(69)

Thou alone art,
Yea, Thou alone art.

(70)

Thou, O Thou.
Thou, O Thou.

¹ Lit. 'the fish-incarnation of Vishnu'.

BY THE GRACE

*Kabitas (71-90)*¹

(1)

They who eat filth are no better than swines, they
who roll in dust no better than elephants or
donkeys.

They who live in the crematoriums no better than jackals:
they who abide in the tombs, no better than owls.

Thou wanderest in the woods? So do the deer.

Thou livest in silence? So do the trees.

Thou art a celibate? So are the eunuchs.

Thou wanderest barefooted? So do the monkeys.

And, how wilt thou, O wretch, O slave of woman, lust
and wrath, attain God without Wisdom?

(2)

Thou bidest in the forest? So do the demons.

Thou livest on milk? So do the children in the world.

Thou livest on air? So doth a serpent.

Thou livest on grass, vegetables, and desirest no
wealth? So doth the cow, the ox.

Thou fliest in the skies? So do the birds.

Thou sittest long in meditation? So do the cranes,
the cats, the wolves.

Yea, they who knew, let not their attainments be
advertised: O mind, let not such deceit enter
thy heart even unconsciously.

(3)

Thou livest in the earth? So do the white-ants.

Thou fliest in the skies? So do the sparrows.

Thou eatest only fruit? So do the monkeys.

Thou wanderest unseen? So do the ghosts.

Thou floatest on the water? So do the black flies.

¹ In this chapter, superstition of every kind is denounced as also the way of works (*Karma-Kanda*), ritual and the code of conduct as practised by various sects of both Hindus and Muslims.

Thou eatest fire? So doth a *chakori*.¹

Thou worshipping the sun? No better then the lotus.

Thou bowest to the moon? No better then the water-lilies.

(4)

If thou callest Him Narayan, or a water-god,
why not also the tortoise, the fish and the shark?

If Vishnu, with a lotus in the navel, what about
the lake which abounds in the lotus?

If Gopinath and Gopal, being the cowherd, what about
other tenders of the cows?

If Rikhikesh, then, that also is the name of the head
of a sect. Madhava is a name also of the
bumble-bee, Kanahya of a wood-pecker.² If He is a
mere destroyer of Kansa³, then he is only the
angel of death.

The ignorant wretches mutter his customary names, but
dwell not on the Mystery that is God Who saves
and cherishes all.

(5)

Provider of the world, also its Death, the Destroyer
of the enemies, Compassionate to the poor, forever
our Sustenance, whom the noose of death catches not.

Upon Him dwell the yogis and those with matted hair,
and men of continence and celibates, who
meditate on God, suffering hunger and thirst.

And others who perform inly cleanings, and offer
sacrifice to water, fire and wind, and those
who never rest and hold their heads down or stand
only upon one leg.

And, men and serpents and gods and demons find not
the Mystery that is God: even the Vedas and the
Semitic texts utter: "Not this, Not this."

¹ a moon-struck bird that is supposed to eat fire. Greek partridge, which
eats glow-worms, and mistaking red-hot charcoal for it, occasionally
pecks at it.

² Also, spider.

³ The reference is to Lord Krishna who is also called Gopināth, the lover
of gopis; Gopāl, the cow-tender; Madhava, belonging to the special caste
of Madhu; Kanahya, the destroyer of Kansa.

(6)

Thou dancest to please God ? So do the peacocks, when
the clouds roar, and lightning too which dances
with a myriad steps.

And who can be cooler than the moon, or warmer than
the sun, and who a more powerful ruler than
Indra, the doyen of gods.

And could there be one more austere than Shiva, more
Veda-learned than Brahma; or one to improve
upon the austerities of Sanat Kumara¹?

Without Wisdom, ever subject to death, one wanders
aimlessly, age after age.

(7)

Shivas come and go, and the incarnations of Rama
and Krishna are also more than many.

And many are Brahmas and many are Vishnus too, and
of the Vedas, Puranas and books on moral law no
limit there is. They come and they go.

And many have been orthodox amongst the Muslims,
and men of miracles, and Ashvini Kumaras², and
the part-incarnations of Vishnu, all O all
went the way of death.

And many were the prophets and spiritual guides,
yea, countless were they: they sprang from the
dust and to dust they returned.

(8)

Many were the yogis and celibates too, and great
kings whose canopied authority extended over
vast spaces,

And who smote all their enemies, and humbled the
pride of kings, howsoever high and mighty.

Sovereigns like Mandhātri and Dilip, the lord of the
canopy, who prided on the strength of their arms.

And Darius³, proud like the emperors of Delhi, and

¹ son of Brahma, one of the Hindu trinity.

² Physicians of gods.

³ Or, is it Dara Shikoh, eldest son of Shah Jahan, who assumed kingly
authority for a time ?

Daryodhana¹: they enjoyed the earth in their own time and then returned to the dust.

(9)

Thou bowest low many times to God? So do gunmen, and men of deceit, and opium-eaters too.

Thou liest prostrate? So doth the wrestler in his exercise.
Is he paying homage with his eight limbs to his God?

Thou turnest thy face upwards? This only is a sickness, if thy mind's head boweth not down to thy Primal God.

O slave of desire, clever in amassing riches, shorn of Faith, how wilt thou attain unto the Lord, thy God?

(10)

Why strike thy head on the ground? Does not one in mourning for his son, or friend, do the same?

Why shakest thou thy head? For, the one with an ear-wig in his ears doth much worse.

Thou grazest on *Akka* plant, or livest on fruit and flower and ever wanderest in the woods? But the goat too doth the same.

If thou eatest earth, thou art no better than a leech, if rubbest thy head against a tree, no better than a sheep.

O slave of desire, versed in wrath and lust, shorn of Faith, how wilt thou see the other side of the phenomenal world?

(11)

Don't the peacocks dance, and the frogs croak, and the clouds thunder?

Don't the trees stand ever on one foot? Don't the Jainas sweep the ground before putting their feet upon it?

Don't the stones stay for ages in a single position?
And the ravens and kites travel from place to place?

¹ King of Delhi, who usurped the throne from the Pandavas and was defeated by them, according to Mahabharata.

(12)

Without Wisdom and Faith, he who merges not in God,
the great Giver, he is Ferried not Across.

Like a showman, one becomes now a sanyasin, now a
yogi or an anchorite:

Now he fasts, living only on air, and now he goes
into a trance or, stung by greed, he sings the
praises of God.

Now a celibate, now one who grows a garden in his
hand, now with a mendicant's staff, he deceives
men.

It is nothing but Desire that sways such a one to
dance; but without Wisdom, one enters not the
abode of God.

(13)

Five times a jackal barks in the cold season, and
the elephants trumpet and donkeys bay many times
more.

What, if one seeks to be sawn alive at Kashi?
The thieves too are cleaved with an axe.

O wretch, why drown thyself in the Ganga with a
halter around thy neck; so do the thugs put
an end to their victims' lives.

Without Faith, without Wisdom, one is drowned in the
river of Hell and one can dwell not on the
Divine.

(14)

If penances were to lead to God of no-sorrow,
then a wounded man suffers much worse.

If by mere utterance, one were to attain Him who's
the God of Silence, then a warbler too cries:
"Thou, O Thou."

If by flying in the skies one finds God, then
Anal, the mythical bird, ever wanders in the heavens.

If by burning oneself in fire, one were to attain God,
then the *sati*¹ also would;

if by living underground, then, why not also the snakes ?

(15)

One man shaves off and calls himself a sanyasin,
 another passes for a yogi, or a celibate.
 One calls himself a Hindu, another a Turk, one a
 Shia, another a Sunni, but know ye, men all over are the
 same.
 He alone is the Creator of both Hindus and Muslims,
 the Compassionate One, the Allah, our great
 Giver: nay, know not another, for there is not
 another.
 So serve they all the One alone: for He the One is
 the only God of us all: it is His Form, His Light
 that is diffused in all.

(16)

No difference there is between a temple and a mosque,
 nor between the Hindu worship or the Muslim
 prayer: for, men are the same all over, though they
 appear not the same.
 Gods and demons, *yakshas*² and *gandharvas*³, Hindus and
 Muslims, they all seem different, but the difference
 is only of the dress, custom and country.
 The same eyes have they, the same ears, the same
 body, the same habits, a get-together of earth,
 air, water and fire.
 Allah is no different from *Abhekha*⁴, the Puranas
 no different from the Quran. All men are made
 alike. They appear no different to me.

(17)

As from fire arise a myriad sparks, one distinct from
 the other, and then merge again in the same fire.

¹ The Hindu widow who in earlier times immolated herself on the pyre of her husband. This cruel custom was condemned by the Gurus.

² See page 35.

³ Heavenly musicians.

⁴ Lit. garbless, or Absolute form of Hindu Godhead.

As from the earth arise a myriad particles of dust,
and then dust to dust returns.
As from a river lap myriads of waves, but is a wave
different from the waters of the river ?
So also from God arise beings, both sentient and
non-sentient, and merge again they in their
Primal Source.

(18)

Many are the tortoises and fishes and many their
eaters, and how many wondrous birds there are
that swim cleanly in the air, and others that
make them their feed.
And the birds of prey, many, many are they, and others
who prey even upon the birds of prey.
What if one lives on the earth, in waters or in the
sky, only the All-death, thy God, creates all and
then destroys all.
As light is merged in darkness and the darkness
in light, so do all things spring from the one God
and merge in Him alone.

(19)

Many there are who cry and wail themselves to death:
and many who drown or offer themselves to fire.
Many abide by the Ganges, others in Mecca and Medina,
others wander about as anchorites.
Many are pleased to be sawn or buried or impaled alive,
and suffer pain as if it weren't pain.
Many fly in the air, many dwell in water, but without
Divine Knowledge they waste themselves away
in vain.

(20)

The demigods searching, the demons duelling, wisemen
thinking, and knowers with their knowledge have
wearied of their search.

And those too that practise ritual and apply sandal-paste to their foreheads, and worship stones and spray scents upon idols, and offer them puddings to eat.

And those who visit cemeteries and tombs, and smear walls with auspicious signs, and get branded their bodies with their choice ensigns.

And expert musicians and players on heavenly instruments, and Pandits too with all their learning and men of penance have found not God.

(116)

Now, Thou art an Arab, now a Persian, now a Turk.
Now the utterer of Pehlavi, now of Pashtu, now of Sanskrit,
Now of the people's tongue, now of the language of the gods.

Now the Instructor of the rules of kingship, and, then, the King himself.

(117)

Here, Thou art considered the Instructor of *mantra*¹,
There, the Essence of *tantra*²,
Now, the Way of the *yantra*³,
And, then, the wielder of arms,
Or, identified with sacrificial fire.

(118)

Now, Thou art the Master of the flute,
Now, of the Infinite Song.

Now, of the foreign tongue,
now of the Way of the Vedas.

Now, the instruction in dance,
now the mysterious snake-charm, the secret *Mantram*
whose Mystery is too deep for words.

(119)

O heavenly Nymph, O Enticing Beauty of the world,
O Fairy from the underworld,

¹ The secret word or formula repeated by a devotee to please his God.

² Belief in magic etc.

³ A sacred diagram to invoke God's blessings.

O Knowledge of warfare, O Splendour whom elements
constitute not,
O Chivalrous Warrior, O Master of the Canopy,
O King of kings, endowed with all the attributes of
the Supreme Sovereign.

(120)

Greetings, O Perfect Master, the Blesser-ever of
miraculous powers.
Unpierceable. Undestroyable. Primeval. Without a second.
The Constructor of our destinies.
Uncaptured, Unafraid,
whose Form is ever-the-same.
Greetings, greetings, greetings to Thee,
O One beyond the sway of elements.

(139)

Some practise the way of yoga through the ages,
But find not the end of Him, their (only) God.
Some devote themselves to a myriad branches of knowledge,
But they see not God, face to face.

(140)

Without loving devotion, nothing avails.
Neither vast sacrificial fires, nor *Yagnas*, nor customary
charities.
Without single-minded devotion to the Name of One God,
All religious effort ends in fruitlessness.

(141)

He whom utters everyone, all over, through the ages,
And in whose fear tremble the mountains, the underworld
and the earth.
And for whom life suffers austerities, in the waters as
upon land,
And who is hailed by the mighty Indras and the Kuberas¹,
(He alone is my God).

¹ The treasurer of Hindu gods.

(142)

Not subject to sorrow is His Form,
 who is Mysterious and Inscrutable,
 Indivisible and Absolute,
 Unpierceable and Indestructible:
 Beyond Time, Unsustained (by another),
 Compassionate, and without pride.
 Yea, He who is the establisher of the mountains, the
 earth, and the sky:
 (He alone is my God).

(143)

He is the Man — Effulgent, Indivisible, Undefeatable.
 He the Creator of the gods, the demons and the
 powerful ones.
 Through Him came the earth and the heavens,
 And all places and space and the interspace.

(144)

He who has neither attachment, nor form, nor distinctive
 mark, nor direction:
 And who is subject not to pain and pleasure,
 neither affliction nor curse:
 Neither ailment, nor sorrow, nor indulgence,
 who can be harmed not, nor His Mystery pierced
 through:
 (He alone is my God).

(145)

He who has neither caste, nor lineage, nor mother:
 And who is the Creator of the warrior, the
 canopy and, indeed, the earth.
 And who is attached not, has no marks or signs, and
 is afflicted not by sickness or sorrow;
 And who is stranger to no one,
 And is justly considered blemishless and sinless.
 (He alone is my God).

(146)

He who out of an egg, formed an egg-shaped universe.
 And the fourteen (spheres) and the nine divisions (of
 the earth),
 And passion and power and darkness.
 But Himself ever in the state of Fearlessness, He blazes
 forth as All-light:
 (He alone is my God).

(166)

His is the only Light permeating uniformly the earth
 through all ages.
 He neither increases nor decreases, and is
 ever-the-same.
 He is downed never, so, consider Him ever what
 He ever remains.
 And at all places, think of His Splendour
 which is never like another's.

BY THY GRACE

SWAIYYAS (243-252)

(1)

Ever-cherisher of the poor, God saves His Saints
and destroys His enemies He.
Yea, He gives sustenance to all, at all times: birds,
beasts, worms and snakes, men and kings.
He is the Provider on land as in the sea and the sky,
and considers not He our black deeds.
Compassionate to the poor, the Treasure of Mercy, He
sees our sins, but wearies not of giving.

(2)

Destroyer of Misery and Sin, He crushes the hosts
of Evil instantaneously.
He, the Unbreakable One, smites those powerful like
the volcanic mountains, but loves those who're
in love with Him.
The 'lord of Lakshmi'¹ could find not His limits: the
Veda and the Semitic texts both proclaim Him to
be an impregnable Mystery.
The Benevolent King, the great Giver, He beholds
our secret thoughts, but, getting angry, He denies
not our daily bread.

(3)

He it is who made everything — moths and worms,
deer and snakes — present, past and
future.

¹ i.e. Vishnu.

In ego, the gods and demons were wasted away, for
 they wandered in Doubt, and found not His Mystery.
 And the Vedas, the Puranas and the Quran and other
 Semitic texts gathered an account of God, but
 He came not within their reach.
 Yea, without the Light of Perfect Love, who has ever
 attained the honour of Knowing God?

(4)

He is our Primal God, Infinite, Unfathomable, without
 enmity, without fear, through the past, present
 and future.
 Without end is He, the body-less One, and stainless,
 without pain and Indestructible.
 He is the Maker and the Breaker of all, and the
 Fulfiller in the sea as upon land.
 Compassionate to the poor, the Treasure of Mercy,
 how Beauteous is He, the Lord of wealth.

(5)

He neither has lust, nor wrath, greed nor
 attachment, sickness nor sorrow,
 indulgence nor fear.
 Bodyless is He, but loves He all bodies, yet detached
 is He, and Indestructible, and without a home.
 He gives to those who Him acknowledge, also to those who
 don't. Yea, He gives to the earth as to the
 heavens.
 Why waver in faith, O man, for thy Beauteous,
 Treasureful Lord ever takes care of thee.

(6)

God protects us in mysterious ways from sorrow and
 sickness, from the ravages of the elements and
 the evil spirits.¹

¹ Also translated as 'water-spirits'.

The enemy does his worst to hurt, but one can harm not
 one whose Protection is God.

He holds out His hand to us, and myriads of sins
 then affect us not.

What better proof of His Grace one needs, when
 He keeps one whole in the mother's womb?

(7)

Everyone dwells upon Thee, O Mysterious One, be he
 a *yaksha*, a snake, an angel or a demon.

The mother-earth bows her head to Thee, as do
 the sky, the underworld and the nether regions
 of Hell.

But, no one has pierced through Thy Mystery, O our
 Glorious Lord, and even the Veda says: "Not this,
 not this."

All searchers, all gods, have wearied of their search;
 nay, Thou comest not in the grasp of another.

(8)

They all sing paeons of praise to Thee — sages like
 Narada and Brahma, and Rumna.

And, even the Vedas and the Semitic texts have resolved
 not Thy Mystery.

Nor Shiva, the lord of Uma, has, and the Siddhas
 and the Nathas and the sons of Brahma too
 meditate upon Thy Nature.

O men, dwell upon Him in the mind whose indescribable
 Power is diffused through the whole world.

(9)

The Vedas have abandoned their search, O Inscrutable
 One, so also the Puranas, the Quran and other Semitic
 texts,
 And the kings of all.

Men suffer untold suffering in Thy Way, but throw up
their hands in the end and say: "Invulnerable
art Thou."

For, Thou hast no form, no outline, no passion, no
sorrow, no relation, no companion.

And he alone saves himself and the others who
meditates upon Thee, O Primal, beginningless
Being, without a distinctive dress, O Friend of
all, and enemy of none.

(10)

Millions of ablutions though men may perform and give
away, with abandon, in charity and endure for long
without food.

And wander from place to place as penitent mendicants,
suffer austerities and wear long hair, but they
meet not God, their love.

They may adopt many postures for contemplation, and
prostrate with all their eight limbs before
their deities, and renounce all, and even blacken
their faces,

But without dwelling upon their Immortal God, the
Compassionate Friend of the poor, at last what
they achieve is: Death.

BY THY GRACE

KABITAS (253-266)

(1)

O Wielder of arms, O canopied King of the earth,
O Enticer of the emperors, O Death of tyrants.
O Great Giver, O Embellisher of our honour,
O Blessor of intellect, O Destroyer of Death.
O Ever-victorious One, who humbles His opposites,
and Blesses us with Wisdom, O The Most Venerable
One.
O All-knower, O Giver of Divine knowledge, O the Death
of death, whose sway is over all Time.

(2)

No one knows Thy limits — neither the dwellers
of the East, nor the 'goddess of power' abiding in
the Himalayas. The Gurdezis of Ghaur too utter Thy
Praise.
So do the Arabs meditate upon Thy Name: as do the
Yogis with their subtle discipline of the breath.
The Ferengis of France, the Qureshis, the Kandharis,
the people of the West too own Thee as their
very own.
And, the Marathas and the Maghelas and the Telugus too
recognise Thee as the only object of their faith.

(3)

They all submit to Thy Will, the Bengalis, the Ferangis,
and the kings of Delhi.

And the Rohillas too, and the Maghelas from Maghada,
 and the warriors of Bangash and Budhelkhand
 overcome their sins thiswise.
 And the Gurkhas too sing Thy Praises, as do the
 Chinese and men of the Far East,
 And the Tibetans too end their sorrows by
 dwelling upon Thee.
 Yea, he who contemplated Thee was invested with Perfect
 Glory, and was blest with all the material
 possessions of the earth.

(4)

Thou art the God of gods, Indra for the demons, Shiva
 for the Ganga, and yet without form.
 Thou givest Colour to the colours, art of Perfect Beauty,
 a superb Musician, Self-dependent, but
 dependent upon the Saint.
 Who can know Thy limits, O of superb Glory and
 Splendour, O Infinite One, the Blesser of all
 kinds of knowledge?
 Thou hearest the cry of the powerful elephant,
 but, first, Thou heedest the plaint of the
 meek ant.

(5)

There are countless Indras at Thy door, and countless
 four-faced Brahmas, and Krishnas and Ramas.
 And those claiming kinship with the moon and the sun,
 and the close-cropped Sanyasins, and the Yogis
 too bow down to Thee.
 And many were the Mohammads, and the clever ones
 like Vyasa¹, and Kuberas of clean descent, and so
 many Yakshas.
 They all think of Thee but, O Perfect One, they know
 not Thy end: that is how Thou art called
 Infinite and the Self-dependent Being.

¹ The utterer of Vedas.

(6)

Thou art Thy own Perfect image, O Limitless, Self-dependent One, so I call Thee Infinite, without end,

Without a second and Deathless too, of most Perfect Brilliance and Splendour, abiding like the mine of Perfect Beauty, who is ever the same.

Who has neither a mother, nor father, nor caste, nor body, and who is All-light, All-glory.

And Who charms even the Spiritual Light, and secular glory and enticing beauty, but Himself is charmed not through charms.

(7)

Of Splendour Magnificent; of political power, the Spring; of Purity, the Source; of extra-psychic powers, the Essence:

Of desire, Fulfiller; of Spiritual Discipline, the edge; of Detachedness, the Way; of Intellect, limitless:

O of Gorgeous Form, O King of kings, O Beauty of beauties, O Destroyer of bad conscience.

O Blesser of the meek, O Crusher of Thy opposites,

O Saviour of the Saints, O Mountain of Merit !

(8)

O Embodiment of extra-psychic powers, O Substance of intellect, O Destroyer of wrath,
O Indestructible, Timeless One !

O Doer of all deeds, O Blesser of good, O Humbler of Thine enemies, O Fire of splendour !

O Death of death, O Challenge to Thy adversary,
O Provider of Thy friends, O House of Glory !

O Magic of yoga, O Sorcerer of power, O Charmer of beauty, O Perfect Light !

Thou bidest ever in Beauty, illuminest our intellect,
and art the inspiration of extra-psychic powers
and of the Higher Mind.

(9)

- God of gods, Immaculate, Inscrutable for the demons
and angels, of Purity the Fountain.
O Blessor of the life of Faith, O Destroyer of the noose
of Death, O Fulfiller of desire.
O Illumination of Light, who breaks the unbreakable,
O Establisher of kings, who is neither man nor
woman.

(10)

- O Filler of the universe, O Destroyer of sorrow,
O Harbinger of happiness, O Illumination of
splendour !
O Thou whose limits no one has found, on Thee I reflect,
for Thou livest in the Higher Mind.
The 'goddess of power' proclaims Thee in the
Himalayas, O Thou devoid of desire, Thy limits
are found not by the easterns, nor the calculating
Arabs.
O Thou God of gods, O Creator of Shiva, Immaculate,
Infinite, Inscrutable, O Master of all, without
a second.

(11)

- Devoid of illusion art Thou, O Immaculate
One, and subject to Thy Servants, and Destroyer
of Death.
O God of gods, O Creator of Shiva, O Enjoyer of the
earth, O Charmer of Maha-Lakshmi.
O King of kings, O Embellishment of the
most embellished, O Yogi of master-yogis, covered
with bark.
O Fulfiller of desire, O Destroyer of 'reason',
O Companion of the attuned One, O Death of the
evil way.

(12)

- As is milk most delicious of Chirawadh, buttermilk
of Chhatraner, and moonlight most enchanting on
the banks of the Yamuna.

As is a female-swan most gorgeous in Turkish waters,
as is the diamond of Hussainabad, as is most
wondrous the confluence of the Ganga with
the seven seas,

As quicksilver in Palaugarh or silver in Rampur,
or saltpetre in Surangabad is of uttermost
purity,

As is the Champa flower in Chanderikot, as is moonlight
in Chandagarh, so doth Thy Praise blossom like
the Malti flower.

(13)

As the purest crystal is in Kailasa, Kamaungarh and
Kashipur, and crystal-clear are the mirrors of
Surangabad,

As the snow-flakes fall cool over the Himalayas,
as does the Shiva's necklace of white snake
sparkle in Halabaner, as a swan duckling in
Hajipur charms the heart,

As allures the white chandan in Champavati or the
sensitive moon over Chanderigarh, and
velvety moonlight in Chanderi,

As Ganga flowing out of Shiva's locks¹ looks enchanting
and as do the cranes in Bundhelkhand, so shines
the Splendour of Thy Praise all over.

(14)

O God, everyone dwells upon Thee — the Persians,
the Ferangis and the colourful men of France,
And, the instrumentalists of Makran too hymn Thy Praise,
And the dwellers of Bhakhar, of Kandhar and Ghaur,
and the Gakhars, and the Gurdezis too, and fasting
men who live only on air.

In the east in Palau, in Kamrup and in Kamaun, wherever
one goes, one finds Thee Supreme.

Of Perfect Glory, whom incantations can charm not,
O Lord, there is no limit to Thy praise.

¹ According to Hindu mythology.

*By the Grace of the One Supreme Being, The True, The
Enlightener.*

VACHITRA NĀTAK¹

(or, the Wondrous Drama)

CHAPTER I

UTTERED BY THE TENTH KING IN PERSON

(1)

Greetings with love and devotion to the Holy Sword.
Help me, that I may bring this book to a successful end.

Tribhangi Chhand

In praise of the Timeless One

(2)

O Sword, O Conquerer of continents, O Vanquisher of the
hosts of evil, O Embellisher of the brave in the
field of battle.

Thy Arms are unbreakable, Thy Light refulgent, Thy Glory
and Splendour dazzle like the sun.

O Happiness of the holy, O Crusher of evil intent, O
Subduer of sin, I seek Thy refuge.

¹ Autobiographical poem dealing with the life of the Tenth Master in his early years, before the birth of the Khalsa (1699 A.D.). The first 101 verses are in praise of God who is not only compassionate, the creator and giver, but also the great warrior and the destroyer of evil.

Victory, O Creator of the world, O our Deliverer, my
Sustainer.

Victory, Victory, Victory, to Thee.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(3)

Thy light burns even, O Unborn Presence,
O God of gods, O King of kings.
O Formless, Eternal One, without an outline, without a garb,
Cause of all causes who Wields the matchless Sword in
His Hand.

(4)

O Formless, Sinless, Eternal and Detached One,
Thou art neither a child, nor a youth, nor Thy distinction
is age.
Neither poor art Thou, nor rich, neither in form,
nor of distinctive marks.
Neither colour hast Thou, nor attachment, and Infinite
art Thou, without a garb.

(5)

Yea, unattached art Thou to colour, form, or outline:
Neither a name hast Thou, nor a place; Thou art the Great
Refulgent Light.
There is no otherness in Thee, nor wearest Thou a distinctive
coat, and Thou art ever the same, O Formless One,
The Yogi of yogis: Purest of the pure.

(6)

Unborn, Mysterious,
without a name, without a place:
O the Desire of desire:
of the detached, most Detached.
O Unaccountable, Garbless One, Stainless and Eternal;
Uninvolved and the most Immaculate.

(7)

The Beginning of all, and Infinite, Endless and without
blemish.

Without enmity, without a distinctive coat, the First,
the Great One.

Neither happy, nor unhappy, neither envious, nor attached:
Neither in anger, nor in passion, Unborn and Unseen.

(8)

Holiest of the holy, most Pure and Ancient,
Not cast into the womb, Mysterious, and the Future of all:
Not subject to sickness or sorrow, Ever-new and fresh;
And, though unborn, is the Refuge of all, this Wisest
of the wise.

(9)

He is our past, He is our future; He ever shall be.
He is Sinless and is subject not to sorrow.
Greetings, O God of gods.
Greetings, O King of kings.
Greetings, O Ever-detached.
Greetings, O Ruler of rulers.

(10)

Unaccountable and without a distinctive dress,
Whom elements can contain not, and Who is estranged from no
one.
Of no colour or form or outline, and Unattached.
He is the God of gods, the Yogi of yogis,
The Desire of desire and also the Great Indulger.

(11)

Now, the Embodiment of passion, inertia, peace,
Now a man, now a woman:
Now a god, goddess or a demon,
Yea, assumes He many forms, the Embodiment of Beauty.

(12)

Now He blooms like a flower,
 Now like a black-bee sucks its essence with abandon.
 Now rages He like the fury of storms.
 O, how am I to describe such an Indescribable One?

(13)

Now like a delicious melody, now a deer enticed by it.
 Now like a hunter intent on the kill, now a dazzling beauty.

(14)

I can describe not Thy form, Thy outline,
 Where bidest Thou, and in what robes ?
 What call Thee they, I can say nought:
 For, Thy Mystery can be uttered not through words.

(15)

Neither father, nor mother, nor brother has He,
 Neither a son, nor grandson, nor has he male nor a female-
 nurse.¹
 Neither attachment, nor friend nor associate,
 Yea, He is the King of kings, the Master of masters.

(16)

The Great and Ancient One is
 Of superb Purity.
 Without beginning, Stainless, Unborn and Self-existent.
 Indivisible. Unpierceable. Immaculate. The Destroyer.
 Poorest of the poor and Greatest of the great.

(17)

Of blemishless Splendour, Unaccountable and Garbless.
 Boundless, without form, without colour, without envy.
 His Splendour dazzles ; His Fire envelops the whole universe.
 Yea, He is the *Mantra* of *mantras*, the Death of death.

¹ The reference is to the so-called incarnations of God.

(18)

He, on whose Left Arm are the death-dealing Sword and the
Bow.

He of Effulgent Light, who abides all over in His vast
expanse.

He is decked with dreadful Jaws
Who chews countless lives, age after age.

(19)

His Drums are beat all over: He is the Master of the black
and white Canopy.

His laughter is resonant like music: His throw-weapons
dazzle.

And when are blown. His dreadful conches, it seems
As if the fires of Doomesday are about to blaze!

Rasāval Chhand

(20)

Deeply resonant are His Bells:
Before them, even the thunders are put to shame.
His gurgling Sounds,
Resound like the fury of tidal waves.

(21)

His Ankle-bells tinkle and peal,
And a superb Melody is produced.
That is broken in no part.

(22)

Like a warrior-king, his necklace of torn heads,
Puts in the shade (the decorations of) myriads of Shivas.
How utter Purity marks His outlines !
Yea, He is the Purest of the pure.

(23)

O Great Thunder,
 Thy challenging Voice makes even the demons tremble.
 When flows blood (at Thy Mighty Hands),
 It humbles the pride even of the mightiest.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(24)

Thy creation are the sweat-born, the foetus-born and the
 earth-born,
 And the egg-born too; yea, the entire universe and all its
 divisions,
 The earth, the sky, the (four) directions, the (four) corners,
 And the utterances of the four Vedas, the Quran and the
 Puranas.

(25)

Thy creations are the day and the night, the sun and the moon.
 The angels and the demons and the brave ones like Indras.
 With the Pen of Steel, Thou Writest the Lot of all on
 their Foreheads,
 And, then, Thou subduest all through the All-powerful Death.

(26)

Thou createst as many as Thou destroyest.
 Yea, Thou givest them life, sustainest them, and then
 annihilatest and raisest them again.
 O All-Time, the Mystery of Thy wondrous Play is known to
 on one.
 Some are subject to Thy Power today: others were when they
 were.

(27)

Myriads of little creatures¹ like Krishna Thou created,
 And like Rama too were created and then brought to an
 end.

¹ lit. worms.

And Mohammads too there were many on this earth.
They came and disappeared when ended their appointed time.

(28)

As many were the prophets and seers,
Them all the All-time subdued but they subdued not Him.
And as many were the Ramas, Krishnas and Vishnus,
They all could not but surrender to it: they could prevail
not over Death.

(29)

All Indras, beauteous like the moon,
Are subject to Death:
Yea, no Muslim oracle, no prophet, no sage,
Can either escape the ravages of Time.

(30)

Great emperors like Mandhāta
Were also driven away by the Angel of Death.
And He alone was redeemed who uttered God's Name.
Yea, Death is the deserts of those who seek not His
Refuge.

Rasāval Chhand

BY THY GRACE

(31)

Dazzles the sparkle of His Sword,
Who is utterly dreadful and is contained not by the elements.
And when He performs His death-dance,
How dolefully His bells toll and knell.

(32)

He, the Holy, Four-armed One,
Of a lustrous hair-bun,
He wields the Mace and the Club,
And crushes the swollen head even of Death.

(33)

His Auspicious Tongue is of blazing fire,
His Jaws are sheer dreadful :
When shrieks his horrid conch, the whole universe
Reverberates with its raucous notes.

(34)

Auspicious and Holy is His Dark Beauty,
Which embellishes each and every abode.
How magnificent is His Pure Form :
Yea, He is the Holiest of the holy.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(35)

Over His Head waves the white Canopy: How enticingly it
looks !

His Youthful Glory puts in the shade the splendour of
light.

Of fire-shot Eyes, the King's Majesty dazzles.

The Sun is only a broken part of His.¹ His laughter drives
out the anger of untold numbers.

(36)

Here, King of my heart, the Embodiment of Beauty,
There, He charms the hearts of the dedicated temple-dancers.
Now, like a warrior, He wields the Bow in His hands.
and, then, like a king's His flags wave and flutter.

Rasāval Chhand

(37)

When He wields the Bow
Even the mightiest quail before Him.
And the Sword too He plies
Like a powerful warrior.

(38)

When comes the time for a fight,
He fights the deadliest of battles :
He, the Treasure of Mercy,
The Ever-compassionate One.

(39)

He is ever-the-same at all times,
He, the King of every man:
Unborn, not cast into the womb,
And the Support of those who seek His refuge.

¹ An alternate version would be: — "Myriads of suns that surround him
envy his laughter."

(40)

In His Hand, the Sword dazzles.
 He is the Greatest of all givers.
 He is our only Future, our only Hope,
 Greetings to Him who is without sorrow.

(41)

He is the Vanquisher of the pride of all heads,
 And separates limb from limb of multitudes, He the Auspicious
 One.

Yea, He, the Master of the white Canopy,
 In whose Hands shine Weapons of many kinds.

(42)

When His thunderous Voice resounds through the air,
 It makes the great emperors tremble.
 All directions, all corners, are His decorative dress.
 Yea, hearing Him, all our sorrows hasten away.

(43)

He Hears all that is uttered.
 Infinite is He and Boundless.
 He Roars like the pitch-black clouds.
 And, yet, He is utterly Beauteous and Enticing.

(44)

Four-armed, Purest of the pure,
 He is the Embellisher of the crowns.
 The Holder of the Discus, the Mace and the Conch:
 He Roars like a Dark Power.

Narāj Chhand

(45)

Of indescribable Beauty is that King.
 Seeing Him, even Kama, the god of love, shies away.
 And, His unearthly Splendour bewitches the eye of everyone.

(46)

He sparkles like the moon, like a mirror,
Even Vishnu is put to shame before Him.
He is the Jewel in the head of Sesnagas:
Yea, He the Destroyer of the wicked.

(47)

He wields the Sword in His Hand.
He is the Redeemer of a myriad sins.
He holds the heaviest of Maces,
And keeps His Bow ever-stretched.

(48)

When blows His mighty Conch,
The clouds seem to roar and thunder.
O Master of all, I seek Thy refuge.
For, Thou alone art the Saviour of my honour.

(49)

Thou art in every form, O Beauteous One,
O Special One, O charmer of angels,
O the Supreme Deity of angels and demons,
O the Treasure of Mercy, Detached and Alone.

(50)

Thou art the same in the beginning and at the end,
Though Thou assumest many forms.
O Wielder of the Sharp-edged Sword in Thy Hand,
Seeing whom one falls not into error again.

(51)

Thy Body is bedecked with Precious Ornaments,
O the Enticer of my body and mind,
O the Wielder of Bow and Arrow,
O the Decimator of a myriad enemy-hosts !

(52)

They Bells jingle and toll (in every heart).
 Thy ever-fresh Melody haunts our minds.
 O blazing Fire, O deadly Lightening,
 O Purest of the pure, the Most Immaculate One.

Totak Chhand

BY THY GRACE

(53)

What pure Melody Thy ankle-bells strike !
 What Lightening, what Fire, blazes at Thy Mouth.
 O of Intoxicated Mind, who bawls like mad,
 Or, as a lion roars in a forest.

(54)

Thou art the past, present and future of the earth.
 O the Creator of strife, Thou art also the Redeemer of all.
 Incessantly, Thou art all over, and yet ever-new.
 Thou art the Embodiment of Bliss.

(55)

O of powerful and dreadful white and wide Jaws,
 Seeing which the wicked abandon the battlefield in haste.
 When, intoxicated with Thyself, Thou wavest Thy fierce Sword,
 Then, gods and demons both cry: "Victory to Thee!"

(56)

How tintinnabulating are Thy Ankle-bells,
 And when Thou movest, Thou stampest the whole earth like
 a quake.
 And Thy immense Gongs and Bells strike deep,
 resonant notes.
 O Thou worthy of worship, with Thee the animate and the
 inanimate are both wonderstruck!

(57)

Thy Discus revolves round all the fourteen spheres.
O Thou Raiser and Diminisher, O Thou Emptier and Fulfiller.
As many are the creatures on land or in waters,
Who of them is there to dispute Thy Authority ?

(58)

When the dark and auspicious clouds of *Bhadon*¹ overcast the sky,
Thy Dark Beauty enjoys them with immense abandon.
Thy set of Beauteous Teeth sparkles like lightning,
And Thy ringing Voice resounds bell-like.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(59)

The clouds of *Shravan*¹ embellish Thy Dark Beauty.
To Thy blue-hued Jewel, millions pay obeisance.
O Thou superbly Joy-giving One, of Heavenly Charm,
O Thou of matchless Attraction, O Thou Desire of desire.

(60)

His Disc circles round all the fourteen spheres.
And, is there another to challenge Him, the All-steel?
Is there a corner where one may escape from Him ?
Nay, He, the All-death, dances His dance with the whole
creation.

(61)

One may build fortresses and seek the protection of a
myriad hosts:
When strikes the All-death, he'd be saved not.
One may write out a myriad *Yantras*, repeat a myriad *mantras* :
Save for God, man has no other Refuge.

¹ Mid-August, the season of monsoons.

¹ Mid-July, the rainy season.

(62)

All superstition is vain : it avails not,
Neither the *mantras*, nor *tantras*, nor *yantras* :
One wastes away one's life thus,
And the helpless ones are driven to death in the end.

(63)

Some close their nostrils and call themselves Brahmcharis,
Some wear a necklace, others but matted hair.
Some get their ears torn to join the order of the yogis,
But all these practices are vain: it is not religion,
but vanity.

(64)

Dreadful demons like Madhu-Ketaba,
And Sumbha, Naisumbha, and Saronatbeeja,
All were subject to Death:
All were torn to shreds in their turn.

(65)

The earth's emperor, Mandhātā, great and mighty,
Whose chariot and discus flew around the seven islands,
and who punished the whole earth.
He, too, was vanquished by Time.

(66)

They whose name resounded through all continents,
And who, with the power of arms, snatched the rule of the
earth,
They performed a myriad *yagnas*, and gathered much praise.
But, those mighty ones too were conquered by the All-powerful
Time.

(67)

They who annexed many dominions, humbling powerful fortresses,
And smothered hosts of men of great prowess and chivalry,

And waged many wars, and were engaged in fierce engagements:
In the end, they became but helpless victims of Death.

(68)

If one ruled over the earth for aeons of years,
And indulged in all revelries, all joys of the flesh,
He, too, quitted the earth on naked feet,
Surrendering meekly before the never-dying Death.

(69)

He whose dominion was over all the infinite spheres,
And at whose door slaved the sun and the moon,
And who won victory even over Indra, the god of gods,
He, too, was humbled in the end by Death¹.

Rasāval Chhand

(70)

The Ramas, as many there were,
All came to an end.
And the Krishnas too
Couldn't last for ever.

(71-72)

Neither the angels stay, nor the Buddhas.
Neither the gods of gods, nor the demons.

(73)

The incarnation, called Narsingha, the Man-lion, was also
subject to Death.
So were the most powerful conquerors
Destroyed by the All-powerful Time.

(74)

Bawan, The diminutive incarnation (of Vishnu),
Was also smothered by Death.

¹ The reference is to the demon king Ravana of Lanka whom Rama humbled.

And the hydra-headed incarnation, called Machha,
was also trapped by Time.

(75)

As many creatures there have been,
They've all been conquered, each in his turn.
But he who sought the Refuge of God,
Was saved and delivered forsooth.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(76)

There's no other Refuge but God's.
Neither the angels, nor the demons, rich nor poor,
Neither the king nor the courtier
Can do ought but surrender to God.

(77)

All creatures that God created on the earth,
Are in the end vanquished by the All-powerful Death.
Nay, there is no other Refuge but God's,
Howso many one may write or utter charms and sacred
formulas.

Narāj Chhand

(78)

Both the rich and the poor
Are subject to the Beauteous, all-powerful Time.
All creatures who are raised on the earth,
In the end are smothered by Death.

(79)

He who dwells on the Wielder of the Sword,
He establishes himself in the Wielder of the Sword.
He who cherishes the All-death,
He, verily, is the Victor of the world.

(80)

How Wondrous, how Gracious is His Form!
 How Purest of the pure is He!
 Unseen, yet of Kingly Beauty,
 Hearing whom all one's sins hasten away.

(81)

Of immense Vastness, of dazzling Eyes,
 Who destroys a myriad sins.
 Whose Light shines pure like the moon's,
 And who redeems myriads of sinners.

Rasāval Chhand

(82)

All men that are raised
 Are subject to the ravages of Time,
 And all suns too, and all moons,
 All Indras and all gods.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(83)

The discus of the All-Time circles round the fourteen spheres:
 All are yoked to the Master's Will:
 Whether it be Rama or Krishna, sun or moon,
 They all stand, in utter humility, before the Throne of the
 All-death.

Swaiyya

(84)

Everyone is subject to Time : Vishnu, the manipulator of
 the world,
 And Brahma and Shiva, the Yogi, too,

And angels and heavenly musicians, yakshas, sesnagas, all
directions and all corners.

Yea, everyone else is subject to Time : only God is Eternal
and Immortal.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(85)

Greetings to the God of gods,
Greetings to the Wielder of the Sword.
Who is ever-the-same, Sinless and Stainless,
Who is Passion, and Darkness and Virtue,
And is also without blemish and without sorrow.

Rasāval Chhand

(86)

Greetings to the Wielder of the Arrow, the Fearless One,
Greetings to the God of gods, who is in the present and
will in the future be.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand

(87)

I bow to the Scimitar, the double-edged Sword, the Falchion,
Who is ever-the-same and ever sinless, the Dagger without
stain,

I bow to the Wielder of the Mace and the Bow,
Whose Light is diffused through the fourteen spheres.

(88)

I bow to the Arrow and the Musket.
I bow to the Holy Sword — spotless, fearless, unbreakable and
free.
I bow to the All-mighty Mace and Lance,
Of peerless Prowess: of whom there is no equal.

Rasāval Chhand

(89)

I bow to the Holder of the Discus,
Whom elements can contain not, and who is Terrible and Brave.
I bow to the One with strong Teeth
Who is Greatest of the great, and the most Powerful!

(90)

I bow to the Arrow and the Gun,
Who annihilates His enemies.
I bow to the Rapier and the Sword,
Who is the Destroyer of all evil.

(91)

I bow to all the weapons of every kind.
And, to the Master of Weapons
I bow.

Swaiyya

(92)

O Compassionate One, than Thine there is no other Refuge for
the poor: Thou mayest turn a mere straw into a
mountain.

Than me there is no greater sinner, than Thee no greater
Pardoner.

They who've served Thee were favoured with material
possessions:

At this time, as in all ages, man is ever dependent on
Thy Sword: the mightier the arms, the better
one's destiny.

(93)

Thou who humbled, repelled and destroyed demons like
Sumbha and Nisumbha,

And Dhumarlochana, Chanda, Munda and Mahikha,
 And Chamara, Ranchichhara and Rakatichhana.
 When Thou, O God, art my Refuge, what careth Thy slave
 for another?

(94)

Thou who crushed demons like Munda, Madhu, Ketabha, Mura
 and Agha,
 Yea, they who sought no mercy, nor faltered, nor retraced
 even a pace from the battle,
 Who, the devils, could be drowned not in the sea, nor
 burnt by flaming arrows,
 They, beholding Thy Sword, O Unseen One, cast aside their
 sense of shame, and fled.

(95)

Thou defeated heroes like Ravana, Maharavana, and Kumbha-
 Karna,
 And Meghnada and Akampana who, in battle, were more than a
 match even for the Angel of Death.
 And Kumbha and Akumbha² too, who, having subdued the world,
 washed their weapons in the sea (there being no
 challenge to them any more):
 They, the unbeatable, the unbreakable ones, were beaten and
 broken by Thy Holy Sword.

(96)

He who flees from death, in which corner of the earth
 would he hide himself?
 For, God with His naked, flashing Sword, bars the way.
 Nay, there isn't a contrivance which may save one from
 the wounds that God inflicts.
 O ignorant one, He from whom there is no escape, why not,
 ungrudgingly, surrender to His Refuge?
 Thou meditated upon Krishna and Vishnu and millions of
 incarnations and prophets,

(97)

And upon Brahma and Shiva, but of them no one came to
thy rescue.

For aeons of years man suffered a myriad austerities for
them, but to what avail?

Nay, there is no incantation to fulfil they desires, and
no one can save thee from the inflictions of Time,
but God.

(98)

Why dwell on them who are of no avail to thee?

He who can save not himself, how will he come to thy
rescue?

Themselves burning in the pit of fiery wrath,
they'll burn thee too the same way.

O ignorant, heedless one, without God, the All-merciful,
there is none else to redeem thee.

(99)

O brute, you recognise Him not whose Splendour is
diffused through the three worlds?

You worship a stone as God, and stay away
from heaven?

You practise sin in the name of religion? Than this there
is no greater sin.

O senseless one, seek the refuge of God's Feet, for thy
God is contained not in a stone.

(100)

God is attained neither through silence, nor a show of
selflessness, nor through religious garbs, nor
close-cropping of the head,

Nor by wearing matted hair, nor a hard wooden necklace:

Hear ye all, I utter nothing but Truth: by seeking the
Refuge of the Compassionate One alone,

And only through single-minded devotion to Him, God enters
into us: nay, it isn't circumcision that moveth God.

(101)

If all the islands were to turn into paper, and the
seven seas into ink,
And the entire vegetable kingdom into pens,
And if Saraswati, the goddess of learning, were to
dictate for millions of years and millions of
Ganeshas were to write (Thy Praise):
It wouldn't please Thee, O All-mighty God of Sword and
Death: only one's prayer, in all humility, would !

CHAPTER V (4-16)

Dohirā

(4)

In the house of the Bedis¹ was born Nanak, the king of kings,
Who brought joy to his followers and became their Refuge
Both here and in the Hereafter.

Chaupai

(5)

He established Religion in this Dark age,
And showed the Path to all men of Faith.
He who accepted his Way,
Was afflicted not by Sin.

(6)

He who followed in his footsteps,
Him affected neither Sin nor Sorrow.
He was delivered of Pain and Hunger,
And was trapped not thereafter by Death.

¹ In the second, third and fourth chapters of the "Vachittar Natak" Guru Gobind Singh writes of his pedigree, tracing his lineage and that of Nanak to Rama. Bedis, he says, were those who were versed in the Vedas and Sodhis (like Guru Gobind) those who derived their lineage from Sanaudh, the King, who himself branched off from the Bedis.

(7)

Then, Nanak assumed Angad's form,
And spread this Religion far and wide.
Then, he was known as Amar Das,
As one light lights another.

(8)

And when came time for the fulfilment of his blessing,
He was called Ram Das, the Guru.
It was in fulfilment of the age-old decree (of God).
And, then, Amar Das repaired to the heavens.

(9)

It was Nanak, the venerable, who was known as Angad.
Thereafter, it was Amar Das who assumed the form of Ram Das.
All this is known to men of Faith; but the fools know not
the Mystery.

(10)

They distinguish and separate one from the other.
And rare is the one who knows that they, indeed, were one.
They who realised this in their hearts, attained
Realisation (of God).
But they who understood it not, were fulfilled not.

(11)

Ram Das, then, merged in God,
Appointing Arjun as the Guru.
And when Arjun ascended to the heavens,
He established Hari Govind in his place.

(12)

When Hari Govind proceeded to the Abode of God,
It was Hari Rai who was seated in his place.
After him came Hari Krishna, his son,
And then it was Tegh Bahadur who succeeded him.

(13)

It was for the sake of the sacred thread and the frontal-
mark (of the Hindus),

That he performed a great act of chivalry.
To protect the holy, he offered all he had,
And, lo, he offered his head, but uttered not a sigh of
regret.

(14)

He suffered martyrdom for the sake of Religion.
His head he gave, but not his honour¹.
God's men are, indeed, ashamed to act
Like showmen and perform tricks² !

Dohirā

(15)

Having broken the (body's) earthen pitcher
On the head of the king of Delhi,
He departed to the world of God.
Nay, not one has performed the Deed³
That Tegh Bahadur had.

(16)

The whole world mourned his loss :
And cried, 'Alas, alas', but the domain of gods
Resounded with the shouts of "Victory, Victory,
Victory be to the Man of God".

CHAPTER VI (1-64)

Chaupai (1-5)

Now I relate my own story: how Lord God sent me into
this world, while I was undergoing penances (for His sake).

On the mountain of Hem Kunda, at a place called Sapt
Sringa, or the range of the seven peaks, where king Pandu
(also) had suffered austerities,

There, I went through various kinds of penances, and dwelt

¹ Also translated as (i) God's secret, (ii) determination.

² The reference is to the reputed demand of emperor Aurangzeb to perform
a miracle which the Guru refused to do saying it was the work of
mountebanks, not men of God.

³ that is, to give away life for the sake of another religion.

on the All-death, the All-powerful God, so much that I became one with the Lord.

The Incomprehensible One was also worshipped by my father and mother who had imbibed His Discipline in many ways to unite with Him.

The Lord-God was immensely pleased with their Devotion, and so He ordered me to be born in this Dark age.

It was not my desire to take birth, for my Mind was fixed on the Feet of God. But God remonstrated with me with great earnestness and spoke thus to this insignificant creature :

Chaupai (6-28)

God's Utterance :

"When I first created this world, I brought into being the demons who became oppressors, being intoxicated with the strength of their arms and forsook Me, their Supreme God."

"They made me angry and I destroyed them instantaneously. In their stead I created the gods, but they too called themselves the God, and received burnt offerings in their own name."

"Mahadeva thought he was indestructible. So also Vishnu. And Brahma too got himself acclaimed as the Transcendent God, and not Me, the Supreme Being."

"Then I created eight witnesses — five elements, the sun, the moon and the god of death — to stand witness for God. They, too, got themselves worshipped, saying,

"There is no other god but us!"

"They who recognised not the Primal Essence, worshipped them as God. Some paid homage to the sun, the moon and the air, and made burnt offerings to them."

"Some looked upon a stone as God, others went about performing ablutions. Ridden with fear, some even made the 'god of death' their deity and worshipped him."

"They were mere witnesses, but they got themselves proclaimed as God. Each was involved with his own praise, forgetting My Commandments."

"When they recognized not God, then, I established these men. They too came to love themselves and made gods out of stones."

"Then I created the Saints and the Siddhas. But, they, too, attained not unto the Supreme Being. And he who was a little clever, struck his own path."

"In this Godless world, strife, enmity and ego increased. Like in a forest, each burnt in his own fire, and traversed not the Path of God."

"He who attained a little spiritual power struck out his own way. They all went mad shouting, "I, I," but recognised not their Creator."

"No one realised the Supreme Essence, each being involved with himself, and so also the Rishis that I created thereafter. They, too, made current their own Smiritis."

"They loved their own ways, abandoning the Way of God. But he whose mind is fixed on God's Feet, goes not the way of the Smiritis."

"Brahma created the four Vedas and everyone was made to follow their instruction. But they who loved Lord the God, abandoned the way of the Veda and the Semitic books. Their subtle Religion crushes out all Sin and Sorrow."

"They who suffer for Me but abandon not my Love, they are received in the Abode of Me, the Supreme One. Between them and Me, there's no separateness."

"But they who were afraid to suffer and abandoning Me followed other paths, they were burnt in Hell and were born to die again and over again."

"Then I created Dattatraya who, also, struck out his own path. He was involved not with the ways of God, but with ritual, the matted hair and long nails."

"Then, I brought Gorakh into being who made great kings his disciples. He tore the ears of his followers for the earrings of a yogi, but he gave no thought to God's Path of Love."

"Then I created Ramananda who assumed the garb of a Vairagi. He put on his neck a necklace of wood but minded not the Way of God."

"As many did I create, they were all anxious to go their own way, And then I created Mohammad and made him the King of Arabia."

"He, too, started his own path, making circumcision an essential part of his religion. He made people utter his own name and not the name (only) of the Eternal God."

Thus, all were involved with themselves, recognising not God. So, God called me out of my penance and invited me thus to come into the world.

Chaupai (29)

GOD'S UTTERANCE :

"I establish¹ thee as my son, that thou spread My Path. Go, and instruct men in Righteousness and the Moral Law, and make people desist from Evil.

Dohirā (30)

THE POET'S UTTERANCE :

I stood up, with joined palms, and bowing my head to
Lord-God,
I said : "Thy Path I shall spread only if Thou be at my back."

Chaupai (31-33)

For this was I born into the world, I utter only how and what
God uttered to me, for, I am the enemy of no one.
He who calls me God will forsure burn in the fire of hell.
For, I am only the Servant of God: doubt not the
veracity of this statement.
I am but the slave of the Supreme Being come to witness His

¹ lit. raise thee

Narāj Chhand (34-40)

Play. I tell the world only what my God said to me, for I will not be silenced through fear of the mere mortals. I utter as is the Instruction of my God, for I consider no one greater than Him. I'm pleased not with any religious garb, so, I shall sow the seeds of the Unaccountable One. Nay, I worship not stones, nor am I attracted by denominational coats. I utter only the name of the Infinite and so attain unto the Supreme Being.

I wear not matted hair, nor ear-rings, nor have regard for any such ritual, and do only what God bids me do.

I repeat only the Name of one God who fulfils us, at all places. No, I utter not another's name, nor establish another God.

I dwell upon the Name of the Infinite One and so realise the Essence of the Supreme Light. I give thought to none else, nor utter another's name.

O God, with Thy one Name I'm imbued. I have no other pride. Yea, I utter only Thy Name, and eradicate my endless sins.

Chaupai (41-46)

O God, whosoever meditated upon Thy Name, he was afflicted not with Sorrow or Sin. But, he who dwelt upon another, was involved only in argument and contention.

For this did the Lord-God send me into the world : to spread His Religion all over, and to destroy evil-doers and tyrants, root and branch.

Understand this, ye holy men, I assumed human form for this alone: to spread religion, to protect the Saints and destroy all who are wicked.

They who came before me, the 'incarnations,' made men utter only their own names. They humbled not those who had sinned against God, and smoothed not the Path of those who wanted to practise Religion.

As many were the spiritual leaders of the Muslims, they all departed from the world saying, "I, I". No one recognised the

Supreme Being nor gave thought to the Religion of Deeds.
I lean on no other support but God's. For no other hope
availeth. So I lean on Him alone.

Dohirā (47)

Some read the Quran, others the Puranas. But in the end,
their ways avail not, and they go the way of Death.

Chaupai (47-50)

Millions of people get together to read the Quran, while
others, in ignorance, study the Puranas. But, in the end,
these avail no one, and the fire of Death consumes everyone.
God created me for this very reason, and uttering His
Mystery to me sent me into the world. Now I proclaim to
all whatever He said unto me, and practise no deceits.

Rasāval Chhand (51-52)

I wear not the matted hair, nor ear-rings. I repeat only
His Name and so all my affairs are accomplished.
I close not mine eyes, nor practise deceit, nor misdeeds,
nor do I anything for show.

Chaupai (53-55)

Whosoever assumes a religious garb pleases not God even
a bit. O ye men, understand this clearly in your minds,
that God is attained not through showmanship.
They who practise deceit, attain not Deliverance in the
Hereafter. They do so only to accomplish the affairs of the
world and even the kings worship them for their appearance!
But through showmanship, God is attained not, howsoever
one searches. He who subdues his mind alone recognises
the Transcendent God.

Dohirā (56)

They who sway the people through a false show of religion,
in the end, land in Hell, sheared by Death.

Chaupai (57-58)

He who presents appearances to the world and fleeces others
 in order to get immense pleasure in the world,
 And closes his nostrils to suspend breath, practises only
 deceit: it is utterly of no avail.
 He who practises false religion, falls into the pit of
 Hell. He who has conquered not his mind will enter not
 Heaven, merely by waving his hands.

THE POET'S UTTERANCE :

Dohirā (59)

Whatever God uttered, in Person, to me, that I have
 proclaimed to the world. Yea, they who Dwell upon the Lord,
 will be ushered into His Presence.

Dohirā (60)

God and the man of God are one. There is no separateness
 between the two, as the waves arise from the water and get
 blended with it again.

Chaupai (61-63)

He who indulges in ego and strife, from him God is far
 removed. O men of God, know this that God is neither
 in the Veda nor in the Semitic texts.
 He who closes his eyes to deceive others, only plays the
 part of the blind. For this-wise, one knows not the Way.
 Then, how will he meet with the Infinite?
 How far shall I dilate upon it? For, men will get weary
 in understanding the import of it.
 Even if one has a million tongues, these would not be enough
 to recount the Praises of God.

Dohira (64)

Being bidden by God, I took birth in this world. Now, I will relate, briefly, the story of my life.

CHAPTER VII

THE POET'S BIRTH

Chaupai (1-7)

When my father departed for the East, he went to all places of pilgrimage. When he reached Triveni,¹ for many days he distributed charities and did other meritorious acts.

There was I conceived and, later, took birth in the city of Patna. Afterwards, I was taken to the Panjab, where I was fondled and nursed with great affection and care. My body was tended in every way, and I got instructed, too, in every branch of knowledge.

And when I was barely of the age to perform my religious functions, my father left for the Heavenly Abode.

CHAPTER VIII

Chaupai (1-3)

When I became a (Spiritual) Sovereign, I tried to spread Religion to the best of my ability.

I hunted various games in the forest, including bears, nilgaus and elks. Then, I left my home and proceeded towards the city of Paunta.

On the banks of the Kalindri,² I refreshed and amused myself with many kinds of amusements.

¹ Now, Allahabad.

² The Yamuna.

There, I killed many ferocious lions and also nilgaus and elks. Fateh Shah, the king, became furious and measured arms with me, without cause.¹

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand (4-12)

Entered the field now Sango Ram, the Lord of battle. The five heroes of stately demeanour—the heroic Jitmal, and the gracious and beauteous Gulab, the death-daring warrior, and steadfast Mahri Chand and Gangaram were filled with utter zeal on seeing the battle-front and their roar shattered the pride even of the lion.

And Mahru also flew into rage and assumed a dreadful mien. He put to the sword many Muslim chiefs. And the angelic Dayaram also engaged in a fierce battle and fought cleanly and heroically like Dronacharya of old.

Kirpal assembled his huge mace and struck it against the head of the stubborn Hayat Khan devastatingly, smashing his head, and blood gushed out in torrents as if Krishna had broken an earthen-pitcher of a gopi.

Now, Nand Chand raged in the battlefield and fought with dreadful ire, wielding his spear and sword with great skill. His shining, sharp sword then broke, and he took out his dagger. O, this brave one kept up the honour of the Sodhi clan.

Then Kirpal, my maternal uncle, advanced like a fury. He fought cleanly like a true Kashatriya. Though the brave warrior was himself struck by many arrows, he made a heroic Khan fall from his ride.

The warrior Sahib Chand now entered the battlefield, and slew many blood-thirsty and glamorous Khans hailing from Khurāsān. He took many warriors' lives and those that were left ran for life.

There, Sango Ram, the King of warriors, exhibited many feats (of valour), and humbled many furious Khans. (On the other side) Gopal, the king, roared on the battle front, and he slew with his deadly arrows as many as he aimed at.

¹ The account that follows is of the battle at Bhangāni with Fateh Shah and not with Bhim Chand, as is commonly believed.

Rasāval Chhand (13-16)

Hari Chand flew into rage and he killed many skilful heroes and soldiers with his well-directed arrows. There was a fierce clash of arms, everyone imbued with the spirit of war. Many great kings and wielders of arms lay dead on the battle-field.

Then, Jitmal aimed his spear and struck right into the heart of Hari Chand who slumped unconscious on the field.

The warrior was hit by the arrow-heads: and he, the zealous and fierce one, flew into rage. He galloped his horse and dispatched many to the other world.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand (17-18)

The bloody Khans drew out their Khurāsān swords, the clash of the keen edges flashed like fire. The bows twanged, the arrows rained death, the lifeful horses fell under their piercing aims.

Drums were beat and the kettle-drums, the heroes on either side roared, and there was a huge carnage. Men plied their weapons with all the strength of their arms. The war-spirits were satiated with blood. O, how dreadfully the vultures shrieked!

Dohirā (19)

How far shall I describe the state of battle? They who fought all fell, and thousands of others fled.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand (20-22)

The hill chief fled, spurring his horse. The arrows of the brave remained untried. The rajas of Jasrot and Dhadwāl, who had fought energetically, now took to their heels alongwith their ranks, leaving Fateh Shah alone in the field.

The heroic Ghazi Chand, raja of Chandel, felt utterly done-out and perplexed, and with the spear in his hand, the resolute Hari Chand raged with a righteous wrath. He displayed

full loyalty to his master, and whosoever he engaged in battle was cut to pieces.

Then advanced Najābat Khan and struck with his weapon at Sango Ram. Other Khans also joined in the attack, throwing their weapons at him. And, thus, Shah Sangram, too, went to the other world.

Dohirā (23)

The brave Sango Ram fell, but only after he had killed Najābat Khan. Men of the world were full of grief for him, but the Heavens resounded with shouts of his victory!

Bhuyang Chhand (24-30)

When I saw the heroic Sango Ram fall in the battle, I, an insignificant creature of God, took up my bow and arrows and struck a Khan and he fell. Lo, my arrow bit him like a dark cobra. When I saw him lick dust, I aimed another arrow, this time at Bhikhan Khan. The bloody Khan fled the field, leaving his horse behind. Then, my third arrow struck his horse and it fell dead.

Regaining consciousness, Hari Chand again assembled his bow and arrow. Such unerring was his aim that whomsoever he struck, he lost control of himself and was dispatched to the world of gods.

Then he aimed two arrows together, and killed many men and horses. No one who was struck by him could assemble himself, for it pierced him through and through.

Heroes, full of righteous wrath, fulfilled their oath to their masters. And the spirits and ghosts filled the war-theatre with their cries. The demons and the ghosts had a ghoulisn laugh. The vultures shrieked and beaked at the dead flesh.

Enraged, Hari Chand took an arrow's aim at my horse and there it slumped. Then he aimed another arrow at me, but God protected me. Only it grazed my ear.

His third arrow penetrated the buckle of my waistband, and touched my body but I was hurt not. My only God protected me, His Servant, from all harm.

Rasāval Chhand (31-35)

When I felt the touch of the arrow, my wrath was kindled. I took up the bow in my hand and showered my arrows upon the enemy.

The enemy advanced towards me, with a shower of arrows. Then I aimed an arrow and struck one of them dead. Hari Chand too fell at my hands and many other princes of untold riches. Many millionaire chiefs also fell dead, and they fled the field, full of fear.

I won a decisive battle. O God, it was through Thy favour that I won. We sang the songs of victory. All my heroes were pleased and I bestowed upon them much wealth.

Dohirā (36-37)

My heroes were greatly elated at their victory, and, now retiring from Paunta, I established the town of Anandpur, in the state of Kahlur.

They who had fought not for me I expelled from the town. And those who fought well, I maintained with all my heart.

Chaupai (38)

Thiswise, I spent many days, protecting the Saints and exterminating the tyrants. In the end, the wicked were torn to pieces and they all died a dog's death.

CHAPTER IX

THE BATTLE OF NADAUN

Chaupai (1-2)

Much time passed, thiswise, till Mian Khan came to Jammu and sent Alif Khan to Nadaun to engage their enemy, raja Bhim Chand (of Kahlur).

The raja called me to assist him in the war and I proceeded towards him. They had set up a wooden fort on a mound and every prince was fully armed with arrows and guns.

Bhuyang Chhand (3-7)

We were joined, also, by the strong-armed Prithi Chand of Dhadwāl after arranging for the good governance of his country. Kirpāl Chand came well-equipped with the weapons of war and he created much havoc in the ranks (of Bhim Chand).

Then, advanced the forces (of Bhim Chand) a second time, but were badly mauled and ran down the mound. The warriors were greatly enraged. Those on the higher plane rejoiced and roared and those down below stood sad and demoralised.

Then Bhim Chand advanced in person, like a fury, uttering the *mantram* of Hanumān. He called all heroes, and I too went to him. We all advanced in fine battle-array.

All the great heroes marched forward in great anger. It appeared as if flames advanced to set fire to a fence of dry reeds. On the other side was the valiant raja Dayāl of Bijharwāl and raja Kirpāl who were all set for war with all their forces.

Madhubhār Chhand (8-10)

Kirpal raged, and the horses pranced. The bugles shrieked. It was an infinitely dreadful sight.

The warriors fought with determination, their swords flashed, their minds were full of anger and they rained arrows on each other.

In the end, many who were engaged in battle lost their lives and fell on the ground with a fierce thud as if a cloud had burst.

Rasāval Chhand (11-14)

Kirpāl was utterly furious and he stood his ground like a man, showering his arrows and killing many brave ones. Many rulers were slain and licked the dust. There was a terrible noise of martial music and the yells of warriors.

In anger, Kirpāl put up a great fight, steel clanged with steel and the great heroes roared.

He gave a terrific account of himself in war, and with the noise resounded the nine divisions of the earth.

His weapons he used with great skill and brought honour to the name of Rajputs.

Dohirā (15)

All the rajas were now full of anger and advancing on the front surrounded the troops of Katoch.

Bhuyang Chhand (16-22)

The people of Nanglu, Panglu and Vedror tribes now moved forward alongwith the forces of Jaswāl and Guler. They were joined by the great hero, Dayāl, who kept up the name of the people of Bijharwāl.

At this, this insignificant creature of Thine also assembled his gun and aimed its shot at one of the hill chiefs. He reeled and fell on the ground, so sure was my aim. But, though wounded, he thundered with great anger and pride.

I threw off my gun and took up the bow in my hand. I discharged four arrows which all struck down the enemy.

Then, I discharged three more with my left hand, but whether they hit anyone or not, I do not know.

Then God, the All-powerful, brought the fight soon to an end, and the enemy was driven out into the river. The forces on the higher plane were scattered with our gunfire and arrows and the field (drenched in blood) appeared as after the playing of Holi.

The heroes fell down on the ground as if in a theatrical show, their dresses drenched in red, as if they had played with coloured water on the festival of spring.

Then, we stayed put there for a time, having won a decisive victory, while the enemy crossed the river and went to the other side.

At midnight, when it was utter dark, we beat our drums (of

victory). Then the night passed and with the rise of the sun, our heroes started out again to measure their swords.

Alif Khan fled: he could assemble nothing. So did his other heroes, without thought. I stayed at the river-bank for eight days and visited the places of various rajas.

Chaupai (23)

Then I took leave and came back home, while they went into the hills to settle terms of peace. The two parties came to terms and so this fascinating story ends here.

Dohirā (24)

On our way home we subdued Alsun, and coming back to Anandpur, we enjoyed in many ways.

CHAPTER X

Chaupai (1-4)

Many years we passed in this way. We picked on all the thieves and destroyed them. Many fled the town, but came back, stung by hunger.

Then, Dilawar Kean came this way and sent his son against me. When the night had advanced by two watches, they launched their attack.

When their force reached the other bank of the river, Alam came and woke me up. There was a great uproar and everyone jumped out of his bed and full of heroic zeal, all took up arms.

The guns boomed; everyone holding a weapon was fired with courage. They made dreadful yells and their shouts were heard across the river.

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand (5-6)

Drums were beat; bugles shrieked; and brave arrow-shooters thundered; the horses danced; the guns roared; dreadful noises mingled one with the other.

The river wore black like the night; the cold freezed the warriors. On this side, we roared like hell, and so the blood-thirsty Khans fled with their weapons untried.

Narāj Chhand (7-8)

The shameless Khan took to his heels: O his weapons did not become him! He fled the field (even without a battle). O, what a hero!

They spurred their horses; nay, they could not wield their arms, nor show their mettle! Even women will be ashamed to look at them!

Dohirā (9-10)

(On their way), they plundered the village of Barwa and later settled at Bhallan. For God was my power, they could not touch me. They could not show their prowess against me and, with zeal, they humbled the poor folk of Barwa, like a (vegetarian) grocer who cooks pebbles to taste like meat!

CHAPTER XI

THE EXPEDITION OF HUSSAIN KHAN

Bhuyang Prayāt Chhand (1-3)

The son of the Khan went to his father, but full of shame for his cowardice, he could not answer for it. Hussain was even more determined now and thundered (for advance). He equipped himself with much war-materials and ordered his heroes to march.

On the way, his forces caused much havoc. He plundered many palaces (of the hill chiefs), then humbled the raja of Dadhwāl and imprisoned and made slave many of the princes. Then, they looted the Doon, but no one could challenge the barbarian. He forced the villagers to part with their foodgrains

and distributed them among his troops. This was a most heinous deed of the wretched fool.

Dohirā (4-5)

Thiswise, he engaged himself in his trepidations for many days till the raja of Guler called on him. If they hadn't met for another two days, he would have advanced upon me, but God created strife for him on the way.

Chaupai (6)

Not only men from Guler, but also raja Ram Singh waited upon the slave-general, in the fourth watch of the day. This made him blind with ego.

Dohirā (7)

As the sun heated up the grains of sand, and the poor sand knowing not the might of the sun, takes pride on itself, (so did he).

Chaupai (8-15)

This man of slave origin got puffed up, and so gave no consideration to their coming. The rajas of Kahlur and of the Katoch clan had already joined him, so he thought there wasn't another like him on this earth.

They tried to offer him the money they had brought with them. In this giving and taking, some differences arose and so they went back home with their money.

At this, the slave became furious and lost all sense of good and bad. That this would be deceitful he minded not, but beat the drums for advance.

He gave no thought even to tactical considerations. The hare as if wanted to terrify the lion. He surrounded them for fifteen watches¹ and let not food or drink pass through the barricade.

¹ 45 hours.

The warriors were exhausted without food or drink. They sent couriers for terms of peace. But the slave, seeing his valiant Pathan army around him, was full of ego and came not to terms.

"Either give me ten thousand rupees now, or invite death upon your heads." I sent brave Sangatia to him and Gopāl (his adversary prince) also, giving him assurance of safe conduct.

But they patched not up with him, (on the other hand), Kīrpāl thought in his mind, such opportunity I will not get again, why not trap him through deceit? Else, Time will deceive all of us!

"Seize Gopal here and now," they said, "and either put him in prison or do him to death." When he got an air of this, this brave Rajput escaped back to his men.

Madhubhār Chhand (16-24)

When Gopāl escaped, Kīrpāl was red with rage. Hussain also girt up his loins and they all advanced for attack.

The heroes went forth, full of pride. The drums were beat furiously. The horses danced, the guns boomed, the arrows whizzed.

Horns shrieked, the desperados thundered. The swords flashed and men fell down dead.

The guns roared, the bows twanged, the arrows whizzed, the lances hissed and the battle-axes clangoured.

The heroes roared; they entered the field and stood their ground. Desperate warriors fought like lions.

The horses neighed; the drums resounded, the arrows flew with abandon, and clashed against (the coats of mail).

The warriors fought desperately, and their victims fell to the ground, their scattered hair flying in the air.

The decorated elephants trumpeted: and down came the Khans, deadly arrows in hand.

Tribhangi Chhand (25)

Kīrpāl was enraged, and riding a horse, waving in his arms a sword and shield, entered into the fray, alongwith other heroes.

Their faces were dreadful, though shining and red (with zeal). Men, hot-blooded, equipped with swords and bows and arrows, were raising loud shouts, like the trumpeting of mad elephants in a forest.

Bhuyang Chhand (26-32)

Then raged the Katoch raja of Kangra, his face and eyes blood-shot, and his mind thinking only of one thought: war. From another side, the Khans came armed with arrows. It appeared as if the leopards roamed in search of flesh.

The drums were beat, the sizzling arrows whizzed. There was also hand-to-hand clashing of swords. The war-drums tore the air. The bards sang the martial lore. Someone lost his head, another's body was pierced with arrows.

The head-caps were blown off. Some broke heads with their maces. The dead bodies of heroes rolled in dust. Some brave ones were wounded with the sword cuts, others were killed. Heads and trunks pierced with arrows lay scattered in dust.

The arrows rained death. The clash of swords raised a dreadful din. The valiant Kashatriyas discharged and received arrows with great abandon. Their masters were slain and the horses roamed, sad, without their riders.

The brave warriors closely grappled with each other, as if one elephant had run his tooth into the body of another, or one lion had pounced upon the other. This is how Kirpāl and Gopāl, also, fought with each other.

In the meantime a warrior, by name Hari Singh, suffering many wounds of arrow-heads, flew into rage and put to death many, and then went to the other world.

Himmat and Kimmat advanced too, swords in hand, and Jalāl Khan who rushed in with a mace, fought furiously, as if intoxicated. O, how blows rained one upon another! How the weapons clashed and clanged!

Rasāval Chhand (33-42)

Now entered the raja of Jaiswal riding a quick-paced horse. He surrounded Hussain and struck him with a sharp lance.

He discharged many arrows and killed many warriors. Whoever was hit, fell dead on the ground. He himself was hurt, but this enraged him all the more. He, with his bow and arrows, killed many of his brave enemies.

Men swarmed-in from all the four directions, screaming and yelling. Fearlessly, they plied their weapons. Each side wanted victory for itself.

The Khanzādās were full of anger, and immensely proud. There was a shower of arrows and the heroes were pleased.

The arrows were making an offering of themselves as if to the Deity (of war), and the bows were uttering notes as if of the Vedic ritual. The spears swished: O, who could hold them back?

The great warriors grappled with each other; weapon clashed with weapon, impatience jolted everyone, when they saw the sword-edges flash.

The bows twanged, the swords sparkled, there was thunderous uproar, or the clamour of arms.

Without thought, the heroes gave and received the cut of arms: the arrows wrought havoc, the keen edge of steel swept clean through the field.

The nearby stream overflowed with blood: the nymphs roamed the blue sky (to receive the dead heroes). Both sides brought honour to the battlefield. O what loud-mouthed and dreadful sounds were heard!

Pādhri Chhand (43-44)

The goblins laughed with a guffaw: the war-elephants fell and the horses roamed masterless. The heroes caught each other in a deadly grip and the war raged in full fury, the swords plying and the arrows flying.

The spirits, the witches, the goddess of war, had their heartful of prey. The vultures laughed wildly and the crows cawed when the two keen sword-edges met each other. The coats-of-mail clanged as they received the weapons; the guns roared, the spears thrust: O what an utter confusion was this!

Bhuyang Chhand (45-52)

Then, Hussain joined the fight in person. Everyone took up bows and arrows. The dreadful Khans engaged in battle, their eyes blood-shot, their faces red with rage.

The battle raged in utter fury: the heroes showed their mettle: the thrust of the double-edged spear and the flying arrow caused havoc. Heroes met their match on the field, steadfast and glorious, with the thrust of lances and the flash of swords.

Drums were beat furiously: the fifers emitted martial notes. The heroes bawled and there was much carnage. With the sounding of kettle-drums, the nine (martial) tunes mingled with one another. He who tasted the weapons rolled in dust. The shields and coats-of-mail clamoured with the stroke of weapons. The mighty archers exhibited their dreadful skill. The ghosts and evil spirits danced for joy. The spirits of war danced wildly, for they had such a bellyful to feed upon!

The great Shiva woke up from his yogic trance! And Brahma too was shaken from his moveless posture! All *siddhas* fled! The heavenly musicians and *yakshas* and *Vidyadharas*¹ had a hearty laugh, and danced the heavenly nymphs in alluring postures.

O, it was a terrible battle, and the armies were exhausted. There, stood the heroic Hussain Khan, erect like a pillar. The forces of Jaswāl fell upon him and his horsemen were cut to pieces like a cloth torn to shreds.

But, Hussain Khan stood like a rock, like a flag-staff planted firmly in the ground. He whom he struck with his arrows was pierced through and through.

Those who withstood his attacks, swarmed in upon him from every corner. "Get him, get him," they all yelled. They wielded their hand-and-throw weapons with utmost skill. And, Hussain Khan, too, fell and repaired to the Paradise.

Dohirā (53)

When Hussain was killed, the forces of Katoch became enraged, while others fled.

¹ a class of gods said to abide midway between heaven and earth.

Chaupai (54)

Full of anger advanced the men of Katoch, along with the furious Himmat and Kimmat. Hari Singh also moved forward and he made mince-meat of many a valiant horseman.

Narāj Chhand (55-56)

Now, the raja of Katoch, full of wrath, carefully selected and moved to a new position. He wielded his arms with great skill spurring his heroes with the shouts of "kill, kill."

(From the other side) thundered, full of zeal, the raja of Chandā and attacked he also with great fury. Those whom they engaged fell, while the others fled for life.

Dohirā (57-59)

Sangat Rai, too, fell on the ground along with seven horsemen. They who heard or saw him die advanced and fought desperately.

Then landed the heroic Himmat on the battlefield. He wounded many and brought death to others. His horse was killed and Himmat fled. And, the enemy-princes were greatly enraged to see their leader, Kirpāl, fall and they unable to get hold of his corpse.

Rasāval Chhand (60-64)

The heroes battled against their enemies. The weapons clashed. The heroic Kirpa Ram fought with great courage, but his army fled. He killed many and fearlessly plied his weapons. Death took a very heavy toll of unknown warriors who left the earth with glory.

Conches were blown with a single unbroken sound. And small drums were beat, as the heroes unsheathed their arms. It was a moment of great crisis, as the heroes fought and fell.

O, how many proud and heroic men lay dead on the battlefield with their fine moustachios and demeanours.

The warriors yelled only one cry: "Kill". The whole battlefield shook under their heels. They assembled their arms and from either side horsemen launched their attack.

Dohirā (65-66)

Seeing Kirpāl dead on the battlefield, Gopāl danced with joy. Becoming leaderless, the soldiers fled in disarray. With Hussain and Kirpāl killed and Himmat wounded, their forces ran for life, leaving their crowned leaders dead on the battlefield.

Chaupai (67-69)

Thiswise, all the enemies were killed, one by one, while their companions tried to assemble the dead. There, they saw the wounded Himmat. And Ram Singh spoke thus to Gopāl:—

"Himmat, who was the cause of our conflict is lying wounded before us." As soon as he heard this, Gopāl struck him and did not let him come to life again.

When victory came, the battlefield was deserted. Everyone remembered his home and went thither. God, the Master of the world, protected me, and the cloud of battle burst elsewhere.

CHAPTER XII

THE EXPENDITION OF JUJHĀR SINGH

Chaupai (1-5)

The fight, however, continued, for long. The leader of the Turks was killed, (but) this infuriated Dilāwar Khān who sent Shaur Khān towards this side.

From that side came Jujhār Singh¹ who drove out the enemy from Bhalān. From this side, Gaj Singh Pammā collected his army and early in the morning pounced upon him.

¹ Not to be confused with the second son of the Guru.

There, Jujhār Singh stood firmly planted like a flagstaff. Though the flagstaff might move, not so the brave Rajput! He took every blow on the face.

The brave soldiers on both sides moved forward, the raja of Chandel on that side and of Jaswāl on this. The heroes fought with great fury and determination, receiving steel on the face in the battle-front.

On both sides the Rajputs were full of great indignation: on one side Chandels and on the other Jaswārs.

Drums were beat noisily and endlessly. It appeared many Bhimas² and Bhairos³ had landed on the battlefield with all their thunder.

Rasāval Chhand (6-8)

With the beat of drums, the great heroes thundered. The more they struck with their weapons, the more enthused were they. The fearless horsemen mounted their attack and swept their swords through the field. The more the sword cuts, the more was the warriors' zeal. Everyone yelled: 'kill, kill.' No one gave thought to any doubt in this. Men, cut to pieces, rolled in dust in their desire to enter Paradise.

Dohirā (9)

No one fled the field, and fearlessly inflicted losses on the enemy. Those who fell from their horses, their hand⁴ was taken by the heavenly nymphs!

Chaupai (10)

This wise, the battle continued. Chandan Rai was killed and Jujhār fought single-handed. But, the brave one was surrounded from all sides.

² One of the heroes of Mahabhartā.

³ the son of Kali, the goddess of war.

⁴ lit. married.

Dohirā (11)

He thrust himself into the enemy's ranks, without a moment's thought. He killed many Rajputs and wielded his weapons with great skill.

Chaupai (12)

He thus destroyed many homes, with all sorts of arms. He picked on the pick of their horsemen; and, then himself, repaired to the abode of gods.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ARRIVAL OF SHAHZĀDĀ IN PUNJAB

Chaupai (1-21)

Thiswise did Jujhār fall on the front. The warriors came back to their homes. This infuriated Aurangzeb so much that he sent an expedition under his son to the Panjab.

As he approached, men were terrified: even the biggest of them fled to the hills. He also tried to frighten people, for they understood not the Mystery of God's ways.

Many people, also, deserted me and took refuge in the huge mountains. The cowards were frightened even more. For, they considered not God, the Deliverer, to be their own.

The (son of) Aurangzeb was even more furious, and he sent one of his subordinates to my land. And, lo, they who had deserted me, their homes were destroyed.

They who turn their back upon the Guru, their refuge is broken both here and in the Hereafter. Here they're ridiculed: there, they enter not the Abode of gods. Thus, they are disappointed in every way.

They are always Hungry and in Pain who serve not the Saints. They are fulfilled not in the world, and at last they fall into the pit of Hell.

They become the butt of ridicule for the world, and Hereafter they land forsure in Hell. They who are turn-coats, their faces are blackened both here and in the Hereafter.

Their progeny flourishes not, and they bring sorrow to their families. The Guru's detractor dies a dog's death and wails when cast into the pit of Hell.

The houses of Nanak and Babur are, both, the creation of God. The one is to be recognised as the spiritual, the other the temporal king.

For lo, he who shall refuse to part with the Guru's share, shall be seized and plundered by the (successors of) Babur. They will be punished with utter severity, and their houses ransacked.

When the faithless one has no money on him, he goes to the Sikhs to ask for help. But such a one whosoever helps, he will be looted by the *malechhas*.

When they lose all they have, then, their only hope is the Guru's Door. And, then, they come into the Presence of the Guru, but the Guru receives them not.

They who run to their homes, without permission, are fulfilled not. Neither the Guru's Door, nor God's, is opened unto them. And, at both ends, they remain without hope.

But, they, who are imbued with the love of the Guru's Feet, they see no sorrow. They possess, both, the spiritual and worldly riches. And, them, no sin, no sickness, can even touch.

He who possesses spiritual prowess, even the shadow of the tyrant falls not upon him. He who, with joy, makes an effort (on the Guru's side), he's blessed with the nine treasures. His name was Mirza Beg who demolished the habitations of the deserters. They who stood by the Guru were also saved by Him: even their hair was not twisted.

Then, Aurangzeb became more enraged and sent his four other generals. If some faithless ones had escaped the earlier assault, then the present one spared none of them.

They who came in this wretched state to the Guru, them the Guru looked upon as the agents of the enemy. They were utterly disgraced and their heads shaved off with urine. This is how they received their 'baptism'!

They who had left, without permission, them the people

also looked upon as enemy's men. Their heads were shaved off and they were paraded through the streets. People laughed: "Lo, they have come to have our offerings!"

They were followed by noisy urchins, as they were their only faithful "followers" and "friends!" Bags were tied to their mouths as if they had come home to feed on "rich" diet!

People showered shoes on their heads and their forehead wounds gave the appearance of a frontal-mark! Brickbats were broken on their skulls. So did they receive the "age-old offerings" from the devout!

Dohirā (22)

He who has fought not in a righteous battle nor won glory through charity, he gets not peace even in his homestead. O who has informed the Angel of Death about him ?

Chaupai (23)

Thus were the deserters put to ridicule. And, all the holy ones witnessed it with their own eyes. The Saints saw no sorrow. For, the Master of the earth extended His own portection to them.

Dohirā (24-25)

He whom God, my Friend, protects, what can the enemy do to him? No one can touch even his shadow: and he who tries, fails.

He who seeks the refuge of the Saint, what shall one say of him? God saves him as he saves the tongue from one's teeth, and his enemies are utterly destroyed.

CHAPTER XIV

Chaupai (1-9)

God saves all His Saints in all ages. And, He gives pain to and destroys all their detractors. The devotees are a wit-

ness to His miracles who keeps them safe from all harm.

Yea, the Saints are ever protected from all harm: they who stand in their way are swept off like thorns. God protected me, too, taking me to be His Slave and gave me His Hand and became my refuge. O God, all the play that I have witnessed so far I have rendered unto Thee. All Thy Mercies and Miracles Thy Servant has uttered before Thee.

All the play that I have seen I have brought to light. And, as many births I had in the past, these, too, I have described through Thy Power.

O God, the All-time, Thou alone art my Father. And my Mother too, the Primeval Power. My Mind is the Guru who has instructed me in Wisdom so that Desire, its mother, has turned away from me.

When my Intellect's core was merciful to me, I accepted its lead, and uttered I the noble Truths. Now, I have a desire to describe our ancient lore.

God, the All-time, became Merciful to me, His Slave, and as many previous births I had, all swam into my memory's ken.

I did not have so much of intelligence. Thou, O God, in Thy Mercy, blessed me with Wisdom. Thou, O All-time, wert Merciful to me. O All-steel, Thou art ever my Refuge.

O God, be Thou my Protector at all times, O All-steel, O One of vastest expanse. Through my steadfast Devotion, Thou hast made Thyself known to me. And, now, in pride, I walk the earth as if I were the king of all!



FROM CHANDI-CHARITRA¹

Swaiyya (231)

O God of Power,² bless me
That nothing deters me from gracious deeds.
And, when fight I must, I fight forsure to win.
That I'm instructed in Wisdom only
by my Higher Mind,
That I crave ever to utter
Thy Praise.³
And when comes the end of my life,
I die fighting in the thick of a (righteous) war!

¹ Chandi, the goddess of war in the Puranic lore.

² Lit. Shiva.

³ Also translated as "I instruct my mind thus, and for this alone I utter Thy Praise."

FROM CHANDI-DI-VĀR (Vār Bhagauti)

First call on God, the All-powerful,¹
 and then call on Nanak, the Guru.
 And then on Angad, and Amardās, and Rām Dās —
 May they ever Protect us and be our Refuge!
 And, then, call on Guru Arjun, and on Hari Govind,
 and Sri Hari Rai,
 And, then, on Sri Hari Krishna,
 seeing whom all one's woes wither away!
 And, then, call on Tegh Bahadur, the Guru,
 who brings the 'nine treasures' hastening
 to thy home.
 O God, be Thou ever with us wherever we be!

2

First, God created the double-edged Dagger,¹
 and, then, the universe.
 He it is who created Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva,
 and evolved the play of nature.
 And created also the earth, mountains and oceans,
 and vaulted the sky over us without a support.
 And created also He the gods and demons,
 and ploughed into their beings the germs of strife.
 He it was who created Durga, the goddess of power,
 and caused the demons to be destroyed.
 It is from Thee, O God, that Rama received his prowess
 to pierce with his arrows the ten-headed Ravana,
 'Tis Thou who bestowed Krishna with the power to
 catch Kansa by the hair and tear him.
 Gods and ascetics and seers there were many upon many who
 macerated themselves for Thy sake, age after age.
 But, Thy limits, O God, no one hath found!

¹ Lit. the 'Source of Power'. 'Bhagauti' in the original does not mean the 'goddess of power' as the Guru had no belief in gods and goddesses.

² i.e. the All-powerful God first assumed the power to destroy evil.

Chaubis Avtār

(or, the Twenty-four incarnations of Vishnu)¹

2-27

Whenever a tyrant overpowers the earth,
 Then come into being the 'incarnations' of Vishnu.
 The Immortal God witnesses their play,
 And then reduces them also to the dust.
 It is the All-Time that evolves all,
 And then resolves all into Himself.
 Himself He remains Infinite and beyond reach,
 And it is into Himself that, in the end, He dissolves all
 Out of these, ten 'incarnations' are better-known,
 Whose mortal frames were permeated through and through by God.
 Superbly ingenious were these incarnations.
 Now, I describe their doings on the earth.
 God hides himself behind His Play,
 And throws the blame on the heads of others.
 He keeps ever-detached from the world,
 But He's known through whatever He does.
 He it is who both creates and destroys,
 But it seems as if others' heads are put to death.
 Yea, He remains ever unknowable, above His deeds,
 And thus is He known Infinite and Incomprehensible.
 O God, the twenty-four who called themselves Thy incarnations,
 Also found not an iota of Thy Mystery.
 Indeed, the whole world wanders about in Doubt,
 That is how Thou art known as Unknowable and Unknown.
 Thou 'deceivest' all, Thyself remaining undeceived.
 That is how Thou art called the great Deceiver of men.
 When Thy Saints suffer, Thou sufferest too for their
 Release:

¹ The Guru is at pains to point out that though he is writing about them, he does not believe in them. His article of faith is the One God to whose authority all 'incarnations' are subject.

That is how Thou art known as the Deliverer of the poor.
 And, lo, as He destroys in the end the whole world,
 He's (also) called the God of Death.
 In time of need, he comes to the rescue of His Saints:
 For, the Great Discriminator is Compassionate to
 the poor.

That's how we call Him the Saviour of the meek.
 Yea, He's ever Merciful to His Saints,
 and so is called the Fountain of Compassion.

He relieves the pain of the Holy,
 That's how He's called the Destroyer of pain.
 He Destroys all woes, all miseries of the Saints,
 And so is called the Vanquisher of sorrow.
 He remains Infinite, no one finds His end,
 So He's called Incomprehensible and beyond reach.
 He assumes Himself all forms that there are,
 And so is He called the Creator-Lord.
 Nay, no one has fathomed His Mystery,
 So He's called Mysterious and Inscrutable.
 He is cast not into the womb, nay never,
 So, He's called Unborn, and Self-existent.
 Even Brahma is tired of his search,
 And Vishnu and Shiva too: for, what are they before
 His Magnificence?

He on whom reflect the sun and the moon,
 He's our only Creator-Lord, our only God.
 He assumes not ever a form, or a dress,
 And so is known as the Formless One.
 Unknowable is He, beyond the reach of the mind,
 So is He called Unaccountable, beyond count.
 Infinite is His Form, indescribable His Beauty.
 His Form is Formlessness: Detached from all is He.
 He is the Giver of all, Himself asking nought:
 It is from this that I call Him the Creator-Lord.
 He's beyond the sway of the auspicious and the inauspicious:
 And the world knows it all.
 He can be swayed not by *tantra*, *yantra* or *mantra*,
 Nor by assuming a particular garb or dress.

He shows no tricks.²
 He sacrifices his head, but not his faith,
 And considers the body as a particle of dust.
 They tear their ears to become yogis,
 And, then, repair to the forest under false pretexts.
 But finding not the quintessence of the Name of one God,
 They belong neither to God, nor to the world.

Dohirā

There are myriads of Vishnus and Shivas contained in the
 One God,
 And, also, countless of Indras, Brahmas, suns, moons and
 the water-gods.

Dohirā (433)

O God, take me to be Thy Servant and, in Thy infinite Mercy,
 Extend Thy Compassionate Hand to me, and be the Guide
 and Light of my thoughts, words and deeds.

434

In the beginning, I propitiate not Ganesha,
 Nor do I dwell upon Vishnu or Krishna.
 I've heard of them but I recognise them not.
 For, I'm attached to the Feet of my only God.

435

Me, only the All-death will save.
 O All-steel, I'm but Thy slave.
 Own me as Thy very own, and give my Thy Refuge.
 For, he who holds Thy hand, he becomes Thy charge.

436

O God, take me to be Thy own and sustain me.
 And pick on each of my enemies, and destroy him:
 "Food for the poor, and the Sword for the tyrant,"
 O God, let both go hand-in-hand.
 O Lord, protect me, and my enemies annihilate Thou.
 Thou providest me ever, O God,
 For, Thou alone art my Master and I'm Thy Slave.

² i.e. he is not given to miracle-making etc.

437

Own me as Thy own, and protect my honour,
And fulfil through Thyself my every desire.

438

Thou art the King of kings,
Self-existent, the Embellisher of the poor,
Have Compassion upon me:
For, forsaking all else, I've surrendered myself
to Thee.

1899

O Fount of Compassion, O Sun, O Moon,
Hear Thou this my humble prayer:
I demand nought else from Thee,
But that I own what my True Conscience wants
me to own.¹
That I be ever pleased with Thy Truth,²
That I die battling with the enemy in the thick
of battle.
O God, O Protector of Thy Saints, O Mother of the world,
Bless me³ only with this boon.

1900

If I want to accumulate riches, these come to
me from every land.
But my mind is set not on them, nor for miraculous
powers I crave.
I'm concerned not with yoga either: why should I
macerate and burn my body away?
My only prayer is: O God, bless me,
That I fall in the field of battle, and fear not
death.

1901

God fills the whole world and everyone utters His
Praise.

¹ Also rendered as, "Do to me whatever else pleaseth Thee."

² An alternative translation may be: "Believe this to be my true prayer."

³ The Guru here uses the word 'Shyam' as a pen-name, as is clear from many other compositions in the Dasam Granth.

The siddhas, the sages and Vishnu, Brahma and Vyasa
all sing of His Power.

Neither Attri, nor Prasara, nor the sage Narada, nor Sharda,
nor the beauteous Lakshmi,
nor Sesnaga, found His end.

How can one, O Shyam, lure such a one through the mere
words of poesy?

2477

The God's Servant merges with God,
Dwelling on His Deeds like a lover,
As water blends with water,
When from one vessel it's poured into another.

2488

I'm the son of a Kashtriya, not of a Brahmin,
why, then, should I suffer austerities?
Or, abandon Thee, O God, and fix my mind on the
ritualistic involvements of a house-holder?
O God, be Thou pleased to bless me with
what I ask Thee for, with folded hands :
That, when comes the end of my life,
I die fighting in the thick of a (holy) war.

2491

Blessed is his life in the world,
who keeps God on the tongue and cherishes 'war'
in the mind.

For, this transient body stays not forever,
so, one must board the Boat of God's Glory,
and Ferry oneself across the Sea of material
existence.

One must seek refuge in Patience, and illuminate
the mind with the light of Reason.

And, with the scythe of Wisdom
in the Mind's hand, cut oneself loose from the
bondage of Death.²

¹ 'War' can only mean here war with oneself, one's passions etc. See below.

² Also rendered as: "With the broom of wisdom, sweep away the dirt of cowardice."

Shabd Hazāre

1

O Mind, practise renunciation thus :
 Consider thy homestead to be a forest,
 and keep detached in thy mind.
 Let continence be thy matted hair, and the joining-with
 (God) thy ablution, and disciplined conduct thy
 long nails.
 Let Wisdom be thy Guru, so instruct thyself, and,
 apply to thy body the 'ashes' of God's
 Name.
 Eat sparingly and sleep sparingly, and have forgiveness
 and compassion and love within thee.
 And stick ever to good conduct and contentment, and
 rise above the three Modes.
 Harbour neither lust in the mind, nor wrath,
 nor greed, nor obstinacy, nor attachment:
 And thou see-est the Quintessence of thy Soul,
 and attainest unto the Supreme Being.

(Ramkali)

2

O Mind, practise 'yoga' thiswise:
 Make Truth thy horn and deceitlessness thy 'necklace',
 and concentration the 'ashes' to smear thy body.
 Let the gathering of the mind be thy one-stringed
 instrument, and ask for the 'alms' of God's Name.
 Then will issue forth the captivating Melody of the Soul
 when struck with the strings of the Supreme
 Quintessence, to beat with the rythm of Love
 and the Song of Wisdom.
 Both the angels and the demons will be wonder-struck
 to hear this Melody, and the gods in their heavenly
 abodes will be filled with Joy.
 Instruct thyself in the Wisdom of the Soul,
 and let desciplined life be thy distinctive coat.
 And utter, unuttered, the Mystery that is God.

Thy body will stay clean like gold,
and Death will strike thee not.

(*Ramkali*)

3

O life, yoke thyself to the Feet of the Supreme Being.
Why lie asleep, intoxicated by attachment?
Awake, O thou, arise and see.
You instruct others, but learn not Wisdom yourself.
O quadruped?
Why gather the poison of Vice?
Abandon, for once, the taste of Sin.
The way of works is the way of Doubt.
Love, therefore, only the Way of the Moral Law.
And gather in thy skirt only the remembrance of God and
shed the Other as abysmal Sin.
He through whom Sin touches thee not,
nor Pain, and you break the noose of Death.
And who gives Peace to all at all times,
Taste thou His Flavour. He is thy God.

(*Ramkali*)

4

O God, my honour is in Thy hands:
O Thou Blue-throated, Blue-drest, Man-lion, Master of
the waters,
O Thou flower-girt God!
O Pure One, O Sublime One, O Transcendent One, my
Master, who livest on nothing.¹
O Master of Maya, O Sublime Light, O Destroyer of
tyranny and pride, O Emancipator,
O Thou without Sin, and Healthful and Whole, who sleeps
not, beyond prehension of the senses, the Destroyer
of Hell.
O Ocean of Mercy, who envisions together the past,
present and future, and destroys Evil.
O Supreme Archer, O Wielder of the Sword, the
Support of the earth, Sinless, O Man of Patience:

¹ Lit. air.

O God, I, of unclean mind, seek the Refuge of Thy
Feet, Give me Thy Hand and Ferry me Across.

(*Sorath*)

5

Without thy Creator-Lord, believe not in aught.
Yea, He who is from the beginningless beginning,
Unconquerable and Deathless, He alone is thy God.
What if a human being destroyed the demons and staged
other such shows, and got himself advertised as
the Supreme?
Nay, it is God alone who is Powerful to break and make,
and he assumes not a caste.
For, He is the Sword of All-time, and he whom He
strikes, him no one can save.
O ignorant wretch, how will he Ferry thee Across
who himself drowns in mind-stream?
You are released from the noose of Time only if
you seek the refuge of the Creator-Lord.

(*Kalyān*)

6

O Love, I tell Thee of the sad state of Thy lovers :
Separated from Thee, the cosy bed hurts,
And the high mansions sting like a snake !
The goblet pierces like a lance,
The cup strikes like a dagger,
And the meats tentalise like a butcher's knife.
With Thee, O Love, I'd prefer to sleep on the bare hard ground.
But, cursed is living with those whom one
loveth not.¹

(*Khayāl*)

7

He, the All-time, is alone thy Creator-Lord :
The Infinite Person, the Beginning and the End,
the Creator and Destroyer.

¹ The reference here is to the Heer story, where Heer was married off against her wishes, but who refused to live in wedlock with any but her lover. 'Khera' was the husband and Ranjha the lover (or 'yār').

For whom praise is as is dispraise,
 and who has neither an enemy, nor a friend.
 What ailed Him then, that He became the
 charioteer of Arjuna?
 Why should He have allowed Himself
 to be called the son of Devaki?¹
 He who's the Creator of gods and demons,
 who's in all directions and whose expanse
 is the whole universe?
 Thus, thou praisest Him not, if thou callest Him
 "Murāri", the destroyer of a demon!

(Tilang Kāfī)

8

How can He, thy God, assume a human form
 Whom the Siddhas found not through their concentrations,
 nor anyone else has seen?
 Narada, Vyasa, Prasara, and Dhruva,
 all dwelt upon Him.
 And the Vedas and the Puranas uttered of Him
 but abandoned the search, in despair,
 for He could be visualised not through the mind.
 The gods and demons and the spirits say of Him :
 "Not this, not this."
 For some say, he is subtlest of subtle,
 others that, of the evolved, He's the most Evolved.
 He it is who created the earth, the sky, the under-
 world, and "The One" was also called "the many".
 Yea, he alone escapes the noose of Time,
 who seeks the Refuge of such a God.

(Bilāwal)

9

Recognise not another but the One alone:
 Yea, Him alone, thy Creator-Lord, who, the All-powerful,
 can both create and destroy.
 What of it if one worships a stone with utter
 devotion?

¹ In the person of Krishna

For, one soon tires of one's dedicated effort which
 yields not Enlightenment.
 One burns incense before it, and offers it
 whole rice, but the stone eats it not.
 O ignorant one, what spiritual power is there in the
 image that it should also bless thee with it?
 If it were life, it would impart its spark to thee,
 which would flow through thy word, thought and deed.
 So, seek the Refuge of no one but thy One God, for He
 alone is the Emancipator of all.

(Devghandhārī)

10

Without God's Name, no one is saved.
 He who has under His sway the entire universe,
 who can escape His authority?
 Ram and Rahim whose names one retails, can emancipate
 one not:
 Nor Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, sun or moon,
 for they're all, all, subject to Death!
 Him the Vedas, the Puranas, the Quran and other texts
 call limitless.
 And Indras, Sesnagas, and angelic beings and sublime
 men of silence too can capture Him not in their
 concentrated thoughts, though they contemplate
 Him for ages.
 Nay, He has no colour, nor form,
 so why callest Him thou blue-hued?
 O man, thou art released out of the noose of Time
 only if thou claspest the Feet of thy only God.

(Devghandhārī)

Thirty-Three Swaiyyas

1

He whose mind dwells, night and day, on the Ever-
 effulgent Light and who gives not a moment's thought
 to ought but the One,
 Who wears Perfect Love, with Faith, and believes
 not even mistakenly in fasting, tombs, crematoriums,
 and hermitages,
 Nor in pilgrimages, nor customary charities, nor a
 set code of self-discipline,
 And believes in the One alone and not another:
 And when God's Light illumines perfectly his heart,
 then is he known a Khalsa, purest of the pure!

2

Eternal is He, of form Ever-abiding, Upholder of the
 Law, since the beginning of Time, Himself without
 a beginning, Incomprehensible and Unconquerable.
 His Charity, Compassion, Self-restraint, and Self-
 discipline, His laws, His Vows of Chastity and
 Pleasing Manners endure forever.
 He's the Primeval One, Infinite, without a beginning
 or an end, of Himself born, without form, without
 jealousy, without fear.
 Of Form Formless, and without an outline, who ageth not,
 Compassionate to the meek, All-mercy is He.

3

O the Beginning of all, without a distinctive coat,
 O Universal Friend, O Great and Powerful One,
 O Embodiment of Truth, O Light of all hearts.
 O All-pervasive One, O Master of all souls,
 Who's ever absorbed in his Real Self, O Destroyer
 of transient impressions.

O Primeval One, Who's since the beginning of Time,
 O the Beginning of the world, who pervades the
 inner core of all.
 O Compassionate to the poor, O Eternal, Unconquerable,
 Birthless One, how All-merciful art Thou!

4

He's the Primeval God, Mysterious, Indivisible, ever
 the same,
 Whose Mystery neither the Vedas nor the Semitic
 texts have revealed.
 He pervades all hearts ever as Truth,
 and Compassionate is He to the poor, the Treasure
 of Mercy.
 His deeps no one has fathomed — neither Sesnaga, nor
 Indra, Ganesha nor Shiva, nor Brahma :
 O ignorant mind, why forsake such a One
 Whose Presence is ever manifest before thee !

5

Immovable, Primeval, Immaculate, Everlasting, the
 Embodiment of Truth, and Eternal,
 The Beginning of all yet himself Unborn, whom Time
 ages not, the Holiest of holy and the
 Transcendent One.
 Self-existent, His miracles are manifest to the whole
 world; though One, He's diffused through all.
 O poor soul, why recognise not such an
 Immaculate Lord thy God?

6

Indestructible, Primeval, Immaculate and Deathless,
 Ever-true art Thou, O Creator Lord.
 As much is the life on land or in waters, it is Thou
 who providest its sustenance.
 The Vedas, the Puranas and the Quran have conjectured
 many thoughts about Thee;

Nothing lasts save for Thee in the world,
O Pure One, O the Master of all.

7

The First Cause, Unfathomable, Unpierceable, Indivisible,
Unaccountable, Unconquerable and Eternal art Thou.
Thou art the present, the past and the future,
and everyone envisions Thee at all places.
Gods, demons, Vishnu, Narada and Sarada, all call
Thee the Ever-true.
O Compassionate One, O Treasure of Mercy,
Thy Mystery is known neither to the Quran nor
to the Puranas.

8

The Vedas and the Semitic texts too are Thy-given,
O Ever-true, O Embodiment of Eternal laws.
Thou hast established the past and the future,
and the gods, demons, angels and Seshnaga.
Primeval art Thou, since the beginning of Time,
Stainless and Immortal,
Thou art Manifest both here and in the Hereafter¹
O my ignorant mind, know thou, thy God is a Presence;
then, who hath told thee of another?

9

Gods, Demons, Nagas, and Seshnaga, and the great
Siddhas have suffered austerities for Thee.
The Vedas, the Puranas and the Quran have dwelt on
Thy immense Praise, but Thou came not into their
ken.
On the earth, over the sky, in the nether regions,
in the minds of all, in all directions, all corners art
Thou.
O God, Thy glory pervades the whole earth: (for),
When Thou comest into my mind, I become Aware!

¹ Also rendered as: "O Invisible One, Thy Light permeates everyone."

10

Thy Mystery is fathomed not by the Vedas, or the
 Semitic texts, nor by the Siddhas contemplating
 Thee in a super-conscious state.
 The Smiritis and the Sastras, like the Vedas and
 Puranas, have conjectured about Thee in many ways.
 But, Thy story is too deep for words, O Primal,
 Beginningless One.
 O Thou, whose Name redeemed sinners like Ganika,
 Ajamala and devotees like Dhruva and Prehlada,
 Thy Name is my mainstay.

11

The Cause of causes, the Beginningless One, Unfathomable,
 thy ever-ever God,
 is recognised by all as the Embodiment of
 miraculous powers.
 The Gandharvas, Yakshas, Nagas and Seshnagas,
 the earth and heaven, and the four directions
 proclaim Him alone.
 The here and the Hereafter, the gods and the demons,
 the (four) directions and the (four) corners
 acknowledge only Him as God.
 O ignorant mind, what evil influence has made
 thee forsake thy Self-existent, All-wise God,
 the Treasure (of Mercy) ?

12

Some cherish, faithfully, the images of Vishnu;
 others call Shiva their God.
 Some proclaim His Presence in the temple, others in
 the mosque.
 Some declare Rama to be His incarnation, others
 that He is no other than Krishna.
 I've forsaken these fruitless ways, and the Creator-
 Lord alone I've called my God.

13

The All-pervading God, Unconquerable and Unconceived,
how could He as Rama be born from the womb
of Kaushalya?

If one calls Krishna the Immortal God,
then, why did he surrender himself to the power
of Death?

All-loving is He and All-holy too, then, why did He
drive Arjuna to battle?

Yea, recognise Him alone to be thy All-powerful God,
whose Mystery no one has unravelled, nor will.

14

If Krishna be God, the Treasure of Mercy,
why the huntman pierced him with an arrow?

He who saves the families of others,
why did he get his own annihilated?

He who's called the Primeval God, unconceived,
how did He enter into the womb of Devaki?

Yea, He who has neither father nor mother,
how could He call Vasudeva His sire?¹

15

Why call Shiva thy God, why Brahma thy Lord?
He belongs not to the Raghu clan (of Rama), nor to
the family of yadvas (like Krishna), nor is He Rama's
spouse: not one of these is the God of the
universe.

You forsake the One and cling to many;
but, thiswise, even Sukhdeva, Prasara and Vyasa²
fell in error.

Hark, O man, these ways avail not:
So, I've recognised the One alone in every form.

¹ The references are to Krishna.

² famous Hindu sages.

16

Some look upon Shiva, others on Brahma, as God.
Still others declare Vishnu as the Lord of the
universe dwelling upon whom end one's sins
and sorrows.
Give this thy deepest thought, O ignorant wretch,
that all these forsake thee in the end.
Contemplate Him, therefore, who was, and is, and
will also be, and whose proof is in thy very
heart.

17

Millions of Indras and Upindras He made and then
brought them to an end,
And the gods and the demons too, and birds and beasts,
and mountains and Seshnagas,
For His sake have Brahma and Shiva done penance to
this day, but found not His limits.
Yea, He whose Mystery is fathomed not by the Vedas
or the Semitic texts, Him alone my Teacher
instructed me to accept as the Guru.

18

Men deceive others by showmanship: they strike an
attitude of contemplation, wear matter hair,
and grow long nails,
And they besmear their faces with ashes, cheating
gods and demons,
And they wander from house to house, driven by greed,
abandoning the detachment of a true yogi.
And they lose their honour thus, their efforts ending
in smoke: for, without love, who has ever
attained God?

19

Why practise deception, O ignorant mind?
Through hypocrisy, one only loses one's honour,

And the merit of both here and the Hereafter.
 No rest one finds in the Presence of the Lord,
 the Compassionate God of the poor.
 O thoughtless wretch, dwell upon Him, the Unseen Real,
 who's pleased not with thy garb (but thy within).

20

Why worship the stones? Is God contained in a stone?
 Worship Him only as God who rids thee of sin and
 sorrow,
 Whose Name releases thee of the sickness of body
 and mind.
 For, the contemplation of Him alone is approved, and
 other frivolities avail not.

21

Fruitless is thy addiction to false religions;
 man has wasted millions of years and gathered
 no fruit.
 How could Perfection or the nine Treasures be attained
 by worshipping stones, only you wasted your
 life and power.
 Today was the time, but it passed away: you remained
 unfulfilled: but you mind it not.
 In your stubbornness, you contemplate not God.
 and let the life pass as it came.

22

Thy heart rejoices not even if for aeons of years
 thy mind is fixed on a stone.
 For, it will raise not a finger to bless thee: know
 thou this, O unwise one!
 Why put thy faith in the one that can save thee not
 from sorrow,
 O obstinate wretch, beware: this fruitless path of
 superstition will be thy end.

23

All are subject to death: no incarnation or prophet
 could save himself.
 For, God creates and destroys all: gods, demons,
 mountains, serpents, past and future.
 They all fell, regretfully, here before us, who called
 themselves the incarnations of God.
 O mercurial mind, why rushest thou not to the Feet of
 thy Lord, thy only God?

24

Subject to Time was Brahma who roamed the earth with
 his staff and water-pot.
 And Shiva was subject to Time too who wandered through
 all lands.
 And the world too is subject to Time: it is created
 and then destroyed.
 Hence, man abandoning the subtleties of the textual
 religion, came to know of God, the Compassionate
 One, who dieth not.

25

Time flies by, thiswise, but thy heart, O blockhead,
 dwells not on the Compassionate and Deathless
 God.
 Thou hast lost all sense of honour and shame, and doest
 only what is not-done.
 Lo, when man is offered gorgeous horses and elephants,
 he chooses to ride an ass!
 O heedless one, thou followed custom (not thy heart),
 and dwelling not on the Supreme Being, remained
 unfulfilled.

26

For long, thou hast attended to the Vedas and the
 Semitic books, but found not their inner meaning.
 Wandering from place to place thou hast worshipped
 many, but treasured not the One in thy heart.

Thy head bowed to the shrines¹ and stones, but of
 what avail to thee was this all?
 O obstinate mind, why, in thy stubbornness, thou
 forsakest thy manifest God?

27

If one goes to a yogic monastery, they ask one to
 repeat the name of Gorakh, their Guru,
 The Sanyasins make one believe that Dattatreya, their
 guide, alone is real.
 If one goes to the Muslims, they'd prevail upon
 him to enter into the faith of Mohammad.
 Each one considers God to be *his* alone, for they
 know not the great Mystery that is God.

28

The Yogis call upon their devotee to give to them all
 he has.
 And so also direct the sanyasins: "offer all possessions
 in the name of Dattatreya."
 If one goes to a *masand*,² he'd ask ye to surrender
 to him whatever ye have.
 Everyone knows but only taking,
 but imparts not to me the knowledge of God.

29

If one offers to serve the *masands*, they say, "Bring
 in all you have, and whatever is in your home,
 you surrender to me here and now;
 "And, night and day, fix your attention on my
 name and think not of another:"
 And when someone demands something in return, they
 hasten away: for they are pleased only when they
 receive!

¹ Also translated as "cemeteries".

² the Guru's agents who collected offerings in the name of the Guru,
 but appropriated most of these to themselves. Guru Gobind Singh
 abolished this institution.

30

They put oil in their eyes, and pretend to shed tears.
 And when they find a rich disciple, to him they attend
 with all their heart.
 And when a poor devotee goes to ask, they shut their
 door upon him.
 The beasts rob the people without shame,
 and never utter : "O God, Praise be to Thee."

31

Like a crane, they close their eyes, and deceive men
 with a pretence.
 Like a huntsman, they bow low but, with their fixed
 gaze, they shame even a cat.
 They are out to hunt riches wherever they be, and thus
 lose both the here and the Hereafter.
 O fools, why involve ye thus with the self, and dwell
 not on the God on High?

32

Why confirm men in fruitless works which avail
 them not?
 Why run about for riches: for one can
 escape not death.
 There, no one keeps thy company : neither sons, nor
 wife, nor friends, nor followers.
 O thoughtless brute, think of this:
 one goes, in the end, alone, into the yond.

33

Thy body falls and thy wife runs away calling
 thee a ghost.
 And the sons and wife and friends all yell: "take
 him away, O take him away."
 Thy mansions, thy store-houses, thy forts, thy
 buried treasures, all pass to the others.
 Give thought to this, O heedless wretch:
 that thou goest, all alone, in the end!

In Praise of the Khalsa¹

1

Overcome thy shock, O Brahmin, for you've received
what was writ in your lot!
So, why blame me? I clean forgot, be not angry with me.
I'd bestow gifts upon you this day: believe me,
I'll fail you not.
For, the Kshatriyas (you say) are the creation of the
Brahmins, so be thou merciful to them and say:
"All-hail."

2

He who serves my people, pleases me. Nothing
else is pleasing to my mind. Offer gifts
to them if you may, for no one else is worthy to receive
them. To serve them bears fruit both here and Hereafter:
All other service is of no avail. My possessions,
my body, my mind, my soul, are ever at the disposal of
my people.

3

It is through them that I've won battles, through
their favour that I've distributed bounties to the
poor. It is through them that all my sins and
sorrows are over, through their favour that my house
is overflowing with material possessions. Through
their kindness, I've gathered knowledge and all my
enemies I have smothered. I'm exalted, for they
have exalted me, else there were many a poor one
like me, wandering luckless and friendless.

4

Hearing this, the Brahmin wrung his hands, burnt
in mind like the straw, for here was a new Path struck
for the morrow, and so he wept!

¹ These couplets are addressed to a Brahmin who objected to the Guru's breaking of the age-old custom of treating the Brahmins to a feast first, and then the others.

On Chastity

As I grew up, my Guru

Instructed me thus:

“O son, as long as you live,

Keep up thy vow (of chastity).

Let no thought of other women
cross even thy dreams.

And let the wedded spouse be
the (exclusive) object of thy
Ever-increasing love.

The Poet's Prayer

Chaupai

1

O God, give me Thy Hand and protect me.
And, let this desire of my mind be fulfilled:
May my mind seek ever the refuge of Thy Feet.
O God, sustain me as Thy very own.

2

O God, smite all my enemies.¹
And protect me, giving me Thy Hand.
May all my family abide in peace,
And all my servants and my followers and all.

3

O Lord, extend Thy Hand's protection to me.
And destroy my enemies here and now.
And, may this my wish be fulfilled, My Master,
That, I crave to dwell only upon Thee.

4

And, contemplate no one other than Thee.
And, whatever boons I seek, I attain from Thee.
O God, Emancipate all those who follow my Path,
And pick each and destroy all who're inimical to me.

5

O God, Ferry me Across, giving me Thy Hand,
And destroy the fear of death for me.
O God, be ever at my back:
O Banner of the Sword, be my Refuge.
O Thou who art the sanctuary of Thy Lovers and Saints.

¹ For, enmity to a person or a people out of jealousy and without cause is a sin, which God must punish.

6

O Protector of all, protect me too.
O Saviour of the weak, O Destroyer of tyrants,
O the Lord of all the ten directions!

7

At one time, Thou givest birth to Brahma,
At another to Shiva or Vishnu.
For, in every age and at every time, it is Thou who
playest Thy Play.

8

It is from Thee that Shiva, the yogi, came into
being.
And Brahma too, the utterer of the Vedas,
And all the peoples, and all ages and all times.
O Greetings be to Thee.

9

He who is the Creator of Time and the universe,
The angels and demons and *Yakshas* too,
And who alone was in the beginning and will also be at
the end of Time,
He alone is the Guru of me.

10

I pay my homage to Him alone,
who has embellished all His subjects.
Who has blessed His disciples with all merits and happiness,
And who destroys His enemies instantaneously.

11

He who's the inner-knower of all hearts,
And knows the sorrows of all men, good or bad.
And whose Eye of Beneficence rains Mercy on a meek ant
as much as on a mighty elephant.

12

He's pained when His Saints are pained,
And happy when His Saints are happy.
Yea, He knows the inmost desires of all hearts,
And that what pains anyone.

13

When He, the Creator, evolved Himself,
He created the earth and all the infinite bodies.
And, when He assembles Himself again,
Then, all the bodies will resolve in Him.

14

As many are the bodies He has created,
They utter Him as they think He is.
But He lives detached from all.
And this distinction the Wise ones know, as also the
Books of Wisdom.

15

He the Formless, Stainless and Supportless One,
Who, the Spotless One, is from the beginning, yet
without a beginning, and born of Himself:
His Mystery only a fool would utter,
Whose secret even the Veda has fathomed not.

16

Him the ignorant wretch images like a stone.
For, he knows not the Profound Mystery that is God.
And the Shiva he calls the eternal Bliss-
giving Lord,
Nay, he examines not the secret of the Formless
One.

17

As much is the range of one's mind,
That much is image of his God.

O God, one can know not the limits of Thy Power,
Nor, how, in the beginning Thou wrought Thy universe.

18

Of one Form and of incomparable Beauty is He,
Who's now a king and now a beggar:
Who creates the egg-born, the sweat-born, the earth-
born, and the foetus-born.

19

At one time, He evolves Himself into a Brahma,
And then, involutes all, in the form of Shiva.
He shows His miracles to all His universe,
Yea, He who of Himself born, is since the beginning
of beginning.

20

O God, be now my Refuge.
And annihilate my enemies and Ferry my followers Across.
O Lord, from whichever corner arises a tyrant,
Battle Thou with him, and destroy him there and
then.

21

O God of lofty banners whosoever seeks Thy Sanctuary,
All his enemies suffer sorrow and are destroyed.
O the Person on High, he who falls at Thy Feet,
All his afflictions and maladies he overcomes.

22

He who contemplates Thee even once (with all his heart);
Death comes not near unto him.
Thou, then, becomest his Protector at all times,
And all his sorrows and adversaries are overcome
instantaneously.

23

He on whom falls Thy Eye of Grace,
All his afflictions Thou wipest instantaneously.
He's blest with all the earthly and spiritual treasures,
And no tyrant can touch even his shadow.

24

O God, he who comprehends Thee even once,
Him Thou releasest from the chains of Death.
He who (with Realisation) takes Thy Name,
He overcomes his poverty, suffering and adversity.

25

O Wielder of the Sword, I seek Thy Refuge:
Protect me, giving me Thy Hand.
Be Thou on my side wherever I be,
And save me from the doers of Evil and Sin.

*Victory be to the One Supreme Being whose Will
ever prevails*

ZAFAR NAMEH

(or, the Letter of Victory)¹

—Uttered in person by the Tenth Master—

1

O Master of miracles, O Eternal and Beneficent One,
O The Provider of our sustenance, O our Deliverer, Bestower
of Grace and Mercy!

2

O Giver of Bliss, O Great Pardoner, Who holds me by the
Hand,
O Remitter of sins, O Bestower of daily bread, O Charmer
of our hearts!

3

O King of kings, O Giver of Good, O guidance of the Way,
O One without colour, without form, without equal!

4

He who has no material possessions, no army, no ground to
stand upon,
Him, too, Thou blestest with Heavenly Bliss.

5

Separate from the world, yet most powerful, the Presence,
Who givest Thy gifts as if Thou wert here before us.

¹ This letter of defiance was sent through special messengers by Guru Gobind Singh to emperor Aurangzeb, shortly before the latter's death in 1707, detailing the atrocities and perfidies perpetrated on the Guru's house by the Moghals. The Guru now had lost his four sons, two in a battle at Chamkaur and the other two having been bricked up alive at Sirhind. His mother had died of shock. Most of his followers had either scattered or fallen on the battlefield. To hurl a letter of victory into the face of an imperial tyrant is to the eternal glory of this Master-spirit,

6

O Thou Pure One, Our Cherisher, our only Giver,
O Thou Merciful One, who givest to every land!

7

O Greatest of the great, Thou art the God of every land :
Of Perfect Beauty, Merciful and Giver of sustenance!

8

O Master of intellect, O Embellisher of the meek,
O Refuge of the poor, O Destroyer of the tyrant!

9

O Protector of the faith, Fountain of eloquence,
O Knower of the Real, O Author of revelation!

10

O Master of intelligence, O Appreciator of Wisdom,
O Diviner of secrets, O Omnipresent God!

11

Thou knowest all that happens in the world,
And Thou resolvest all its problems and doubts.

12

O Thou all-knowing God, O Great One,
Thou alone art the organiser of our lives.

The Memorandum (to Aurangzeb)

13

I have no faith in thy oaths,
Even if thou bringest in God as thy witness.

14

I haven't even an iota of trust in thee,
For, all thy ministers and thy courtiers are liars.

15

He who puts faith in thy oath on the Quran,
He, in the end, comes to ruin.

16

But, beware, that the insolent crow
Can lay not its hands upon one whose protection is Huma, the
Bird of Heaven.

17

He who seeks the refuge of the tiger
Can he harmed not by a goat, a deer or a buffalow.

18

Had I vowed even secretly on the book of my faith,
I would have withdrawn my infantry and cavalry from
the field.¹

19

And, what could my forty men do (at Chamkaur), when a
hundred thousand men, unawares, pounced upon them?

20

The oath-breakers attacked them, of a sudden, with swords,
arrows and guns.

21

I had, perforce, to join battle with thy hosts,
And I too fought with the muskets and arrows as best as I
could.

¹ The reference is to the sworn word of Aurangzeb that if the Guru came out of his fortress of Anandpur, he would be allowed safe conduct. The Guru trusted in this oath, but was betrayed by the Moghal forces.

22

When an affair is past every other remedy,
It is righteous, indeed, to unsheath the sword.

23

Hadn't I taken thee on thy word upon the Quran,
I wouldn't have chosen the path I did.

24

I knew not that thy men were crafty and deceitful like a
fox,
Else I wouldn't have driven myself to this state.

25

He who swears to me on the Quran
Ought not to have killed or imprisoned my men.

26

Thy army drest like blue-bottles,
Charged us, of a sudden, with a loud bang.

27

But, he who advanced from thy ranks beyond his defences,
Was hit with such deadly aim of my single arrow that he
was deluged in blood.

28

But they who aggressed not against us
Were left unhurt, unmolested by us.

29

When I witnessed thy general, Nahar Khan, advancing for war,
I gave him the taste of a single deadly arrow.

30

And many of his men who boasted of their valour,
Fled the battlefield, in utter shame.

31

Then advanced another one of Afghan blood,
Rushing forth like flood, like a gun-ball, or a deadly arrow.

32

He made many assaults with great courage,
Some with conscious skill, and others like mad.

33

The more he attacked, the more he was mauled,
And then while killing two of my ranks,
He, too, fell dead in the cold dust.

34

But the cowardly and contemptible Khawaja came not forth
like a man,
And hid himself behind a wall.

35

Had I but seen his face,
I couldn't but have helped him too with an arrow.

36

At last, many on their side fell to the ground
Hit by the arrows and the death-dealing bullets.

37

There was, indeed, an over-powering rain of these,
And the earth turned red like the lāllā flower.

38

Torn heads and legs lay in heaps,
As if the earth was covered with balls and sticks.

39

The arrows whizzed, the bows twanged,
And, it brought forth from the earth only cries and yells.

40

There were other dreadful, vengeful noises too, of
 weapons and men,
When men, bravest of the brave, battled like mad.

41

But, what kind of chivalry is this in war,
That countless hosts should pounce upon a mere forty of us,

42

When the lamp of the world veiled itself,
And the queen of night came forth with all her splendour.

43

He who trusts, however, in an oath on God,
His Protection also is He; in need, He shows the Path.

44

So, not even a hair of mine was touched, nor my body
 suffered,
For, the God, the Destroyer of my enemies, Himself pulled
 me out to safety.

45

I knew not that you, O man, were a perjurer,
And a worshipper of pelf, and a breaker of faith.

46

Nay, you keep no faith, nor mind religion,
Nor know God, nor believe in Mohammad.

47

He who observes the tenets of his faith,
He makes a promise but never to break it.

48

You have no idea of what an oath on the Quran is:
Nay, you have no faith in the One God.

49

Now if you were to swear a hundred times on the Quran,
I'd regard not thy word, not an iota of it.

50

Had you ever a mind to keep thy faith,
You would have taken courage and come to me.

51

From when you gave your word,
Swearing in the name of God's Word, it was incumbent on
you to keep your faith.

52

If your majesty were to be present here before me,
I would have with all my heart posted you with your
treachery.

53

Do now what is enjoined upon you,
And stick to your written and plighted word.

54

The written word and the verbal promise of your envoy,
Both, should have been fulfilled by you.

55

He alone is a man who keeps his word:
Not that he has one thing in the heart, and another on
the tongue.

56

Your promise was to honour the Qazi's word,
If that be true, then come thou to me.

57

If you want to seal thy promise on the Quran,
I would send the document forsure to thee.

58

If only you were gracious enough to come to the village
of Kangar,
We could, then, see each other face to face.

59

On the way, there'll be no danger to your life,
For, the whole tribe of Bairars accepts my command.

60

Come to me that we may converse with each other,
And I may utter some 'kind' words to thee.

61

I'd send thee a horse (-man) like one in a thousand,
Who will conduct thee safe to my home.¹

62

I'm a slave of the King of kings,
And ready to obey His Call with all my heart.

63

If He were to order me thus,
I'd with utmost pleasure present myself to thee.

¹ It has also been rendered as, "Bring along a choice horse, valued at a thousand rupees, that you may snatch away this country from me!"

64

And if you are a believer in One God,
Tarry not in what I ask you to do.

65

It is incumbent upon you to recognise the God,
For He told you not to create strife in the world.

66

You occupy the throne, in the name of God,
the Sovereign of all creation,
But strange is thy justice, stranger thy attributes!

67

What sense of discrimination is this? What regard for
religion?
O fie on such a sovereignty! Fie, a hundred times!!

68

Stranger than strange are thy decrees, O king,
But, beware, that broken pledges boomerang on those who
make them.

69

Shed not recklessly the blood of another with thy sword,
Lest the Sword on High falls upon thy neck.

70

O man, beware, and fear thy God,
For, through flattery or cajolery He can be deceived not.

71

He, the King of kings, fears no one,
And is the True Sovereign of the earth and heaven.

72

God is the Master of the earth and the sky:
He's the Creator of all men, all places.

73

He it is who Creates all—from the feeble ant to
the powerful elephant,
And is the Embellisher of the meek and Destroyer of the
reckless.

74

His name is: "Protector of the meek."
And Himself He's dependent upon no one's support or
obligation.

75

He has no twist in Him, nor doubt.
And, He shows man the Way to Redemption and Release.

76

You are bound, indeed, by your word on the Quran,
Let, therefore, the matter come to a good end, as is your
promise.

77

It is but meet that you act wisely,
And be discreet in all that you do.

78

What, if you have killed my four tender sons,
When I, like a coiled snake, remain behind?

79

It isn't brave to put out a few sparks,
And stir up fire to rage all the more!

80

What a beautiful thought has Firdausi, the sweet-tongued
poet, expressed:

"He who acts in haste, plays the devil."

81

When you and I will, both, repair to the Court of God,
You will bear witness to what you did unto me.

82

But, if you will forget even this,
Then, God on High will also forget you from His Mind.

83

God will reward you well for your misdeeds,
Which you launched with all your recklessness!

84

This is the keeping of faith: this the act of
goodness,
To put God above the love of life.

85

I believe not that you know God,
Since, from you have come only the tyrannous acts.

86

The Beneficent God also will know thee not,
And will welcome not thee with all thy riches.

87

If (now) you swear a hundred times on the Quran,
I will not trust you even for a moment.

88

I will enter not your presence, nor travel on the same
road,
Even if you so ordain, I would oblige you not.

89

O Aurangzeb, king of kings, fortunate are you,
An expert swordsman and a horseman too:

90

Handsome is your person and your intellect high,
Master of the lands, ruler and emperor.

91

A skilled wielder of the sword, and clever in
administration,
A master-warrior and a man of charitable disposition.

92

You grant riches and lands in charity,
O one of handsome body and brilliant mind.

93

Great is your munificence, in war you are like a mountain,
Of angelic disposition, your splendour is like
that of Pleiades.

94

You are the king of kings, ornament of the thrones of
the world:
Master of the world, *but far from religion!*

95

I warred with the idol-worshipping hill chiefs,
For, I'm the breaker of idols and they their worshippers.

96

Beware, the world keeps not faith with any:
He who rises also falls and comes to grief.

97

And, look also at the miracle that is God,
That He may destroy a whole host through a single
man!

98

What can an enemy do to him whose Friend is God?
For, the function of the Great Bestower is: To Bestow.

99

He grants Deliverance and shows also the Way.
And He teaches the tongue to utter His praises, in love.

100

In the time of need, He blinds the enemy,
And protects the helpless from all injury and harm.

101

And he who acts in good faith,
On him, the Merciful One, rains His Mercy.

102

He who serves Him with all his heart,
God blesses him with the Peace of Soul.

103

What harm can an enemy do to him,
On whom is the Pleasure of God, our Supreme Guide?

104

The Creator-Lord is ever his refuge,
even if tens of thousands of hosts were
to proceed against him.

105

If you have the pride of your army and riches,
I bank upon the Praise of God, the All-mighty.

106

You are proud of your empire and material possessions,
while I am proud of the Refuge of God, the
Immortal.

107

Be not heedless: for the world lasts but a few days,
And man may leave it, one knows not when?

108

Look at the ever-changing faithless world:
And see what happens to every house, every denizon.

109

If you are strong, torture not the weak,
And thus lay not the axe to thy empire.

110

If the One God is one's Friend, what harm can the
enemy do,
Even if he multiplies himself a hundred times?

111

A thousand times let an enemy assault him,
And yet touch not even a hair of his head!

* * *

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